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From the Editor

Sue Paxman
Lexington, Massachusetts

In our Spring 1987 issue, Jane Bendt from New Mexico eloquently explained what it means to live with epilepsy. The first articles in this issue describe facing, coping, and living with other kinds of disabilities. We appreciate the ability of these women to articulate their realities for us so that we can better understand, hence be more supportive of, those of us who are confronted with disabilities that seem beyond our control.

A common thought running through these accounts is that accepting our realities greatly enhances our ability to take control over situations that at times appear to be uncontrollable. Jane's personal success, in spite of her physical problems, is apparent in her essay and, more particularly, when you meet her. She quite obviously has faced her reality and taken control. By example, she also shows us that learning all you can about a disability and about the resources available to someone with that disability increases our opportunities for control and success.

The essays presented here reiterate her points and further demonstrate the spiritual strength and maturity required and developed by those who deal with disabilities. As I have discussed their written

contributions with each of these women, I have been overwhelmed by their positive, grateful approaches to life. They are quite obviously people who have been presented with challenges, have struggled mightily, and have found ways of enduring and succeeding. Carmen B. Pingree, for example, has learned all she can about autism, and is a key figure in the national fight to combat autism.

Most of us are disabled in one way or another; however, because most of us do not recognize the disability, we do not confront it and learn from it. These women have. We have much to learn from them--how to support them in their struggles as well as how to confront and overcome our own.

For those dealing with disabilities in children, the following resources will be of help:

The National Information Center for Handicapped Children and Youth (NICHCY)
P.O. Box 1492
Washington, D. C. 20013
703/522-0870
(provides information about various disabilities and contacts within each state)

The Federation for Children with Special Needs
312 Stuart Street
Boston, MA 02116
617/482-2915
(national organization run by parents; provides addresses of local groups that offer training, information, and counseling for parents and children)

We would like to publish a more extensive list of the addresses of agencies or organizations that you know provide quality assistance to the disabled. Please send these addresses and include a brief description of the services that each offers. We can form another network within our network.

In our next issue (Volume XIV, No. 1), we will be dealing with the topic of emotional and physical spouse abuse. We encourage any of you who have information and understanding to share to do so by submitting an essay, a letter, or a response to "Sisters Help" by December 1.

The following issue (Volume XIV, No. 2) will be about raising boys, and again we encourage you to share your experience with us. Those essays and letters need to be to us by February 1.

Feminist Impressions of Sunstone

Judy Dushku

Watertown, Massachusetts

Feminist men and women were treated to a rich program by the organizers of this year's Sunstone Symposium (Salt Lake City, August 26-29). From the first plenary session through the last concurrent session, authors and discussants either concentrated on the part women played or included significant information or insight on women's contribution or connection to a topic involving men and women. Topics with titles specifically featuring women, women writers, and discussants drew crowds of interested men, as well as women. At times, it was all rather like a good fantasy that I have had for years, and yet here it was happening for real!

The first plenary session, a panel discussion of "Changing Family Roles in Mormonism," was chaired by Marybeth Raynes, a Salt Lake family therapist and member of the Sunstone board of trustees. Panelists were L. Jackson Newell, Dean of Liberal Education at the University of Utah, and outgoing co-editor of *Dialogue*; Tim B. Heaton, Associate Professor of Sociology at BYU; Kathryn Della-Piana, member of the Board of Directors of Mothers at Home, an organization established to assist mothers who have shifted from roles as out-of-the-home-workers-for-pay to in-the-home-mothers-for-no-pay; and Cheryl May, Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of Utah. Ms. Rayne's opening comment--that a family is like a group with a rope tied to each member, snugly enough so that when any one of the members of the group shifts in any way, all the others at least feel the tug--set the theme of the panel. Kathryn Della-Piana reported on the difficulties encountered by women all over the country who have opted to return from the workforce, against a trend, to homemaking. Tim Heaton reported interesting statistics that indicate the patterns in Mormon culture are similar to those of the rest of American society. A general opinion that emerged from the four presenters' papers and from Marybeth Raynes was that there are many configurations of Mormon families, many mirroring those that appear in the vast literature on non-Mormon families in America. Panelists felt that efforts to stifle information about the realities of LDS family life were confusing and harmful to the thousands of faithful LDS people who try to build families that conform to notions of righteousness and success.

Ian Barber, of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Otago, in New Zealand, delivered a fascinating paper on "The Mythic Other: Women, Chil-

dren, and Ethnic Minorities as Separate Humanity and Natural Seers in Early Mormonism." His paper dealt with early attitudes about special powers and gifts that distinguished the groups from adult white male members. He also discussed how these attitudes have contributed to contemporary ideas about women's "specialness" in relation to men in the Church today.

Phyllis Tribble, Professor of Old Testament at the Union Theological Seminary, enlightened a huge audience with her interpretations of important Old Testament women. In her interpretations, Eve, Ruth, and the powerful woman of the Song of Solomon (among others) become vastly more complicated and stirring individuals; they become what Tribble insists they were supposed to be--role models of righteous and ethical strength as well as higher models of equality of the sexes in the Bible, which she claims was the intent.

Five women reflected on LDS temple experiences and commented on alternative interpretations of such things as veiling of women in the temple and the different vows of obedience that men and women make there. This panel dealt with both doctrinal issues in the temple ceremony and issues having to do with temple interviewing practices and rules on female worthiness.

Other papers included: "Monogamy, Polygamy, Fidelity: Interlocking Patterns of the Sacral Marriage Rite," by Margaret Toscano, instructor of Greek at BYU; "A New View of Mormon Doctrine of Women's Place," by Abraham Van Luik; and "For Those Who Have Ears to Hear: Subversive Hidden Messages in Conventional Women's Discourse," by Dorice Williams Elliott of The Johns Hopkins University.

Alison Craig presented a paper entitled "My Incomplete Journey to Peace: Feminism and the Church."

Irene Bates, co-author of a forthcoming book on the Office of the Church Patriarch, chaired a panel of some of the authors of the new book *Sisters in Spirit*, which is now available from University of Illinois Press. Topics at this panel ranged from women in temple ceremony, to images of women as mothers, to spiritual gifts of women and their legitimacy in administering these gifts.

Four Black Mormon women participated in a panel called "I Gotta Be Me--Positively: The Struggle of Being Black in the Church," and talked about a new

publication about, by, and for Black Church members and others.

Sharon Swenson, Director of the Utah Humanities Resource Center, chaired a panel of Relief Society presidents called "How Do You Spell Relief."

Lin Ostler, formerly a plural wife and presently a researcher and student of contemporary polygamist families, chaired a panel made up of four women who currently live as plural wives in Utah. All four explained their commitment to the concept of "celestial marriage" and spoke of their experiences living under plural marriage today.

Five women participated in a panel called "From the Mothers in Zion: The Experience of Mothering in the Modern Mormon Church."

Other sessions focused on more than women-related issues where feminist interpretations of doctrine and history were included. Certainly the paper on the Holy Ghost included the increasingly popular hypothesis that the Holy Ghost is the female member of the Godhead. The session on "Sex Education or Erotophobia," a paper written by Terence L. Day, included major sections on the treatment of female sexuality in the new Church handbook on sex education called "A Parents' Guide."

One of the most significant papers, in my opinion, was one by Melodie Moench Charles called "The Reconstruction of Heaven." She examined the commonly held LDS vision of the nature of life after death, explained the probable origins of this vision, and called for its rejection in light of the lack of scripture, adequate prophetic statement, and logic to support it.

In addition, many sessions not about women's issues were given by women. Women authors, women poets, and former *Exponent II* editor Susan Howe, a playwright, presented their work. Levi Peterson, author and English professor at Weber State, gave a powerful paper about a hero in Mormon women's history, Juanita Brooks. Women also chaired sessions and commented on papers. While this all sounds, of course, like what one should expect, the fact is that a few years ago this was not the case at the Sunstone Symposium or at any other conference of this sort in or out of the Church. It was a remarkable achievement, worthy of serving as a model for future conferences.

Carmen B. Pingree
Salt Lake City, Utah

"Please Stand By... Communication Lines are Temporarily In Order"

Our kitchen is alive
With overdue hugs, snack-laden dishes
And noisy laughter of reunion
With our out-of-town friends.

In all the joyful chaos
Somehow they found each other,
These two handsome boys
Stamped "handicapped,"
"Seconds" from the production line of life--
Her son's hearing nonfunctional from birth
With adolescence inactivating another component
As blindness sets in--
My seemingly noncaring child,
A victim of Autism
Which has miswired
His language, sensory, and social chips.

Suddenly, our "normal" transmissions cease,
Interrupted by a surging signal
Which commands the lines.
And jumping every substation,
Hers--near sightless, yet
Seeing clearly his need to reach out--
Earnestly models
The language of the hands
To mine
Who, with a sensitivity
Neurological technicians pronounce out of order.
Strains to focus laser-like
On returning the tutored word.

And we,
Sharing a glimpse of that day
When all present equipment
Is outmoded
Watch . . . and weep.

A Song for Brian

Perhaps my arms or legs
Do not move properly.
The ears or eyes I'm given
May refuse to hear or see.
Still I'll walk the narrow way,
Hold fast to what is right.
I can hear the Spirit prompting me
And see the Gospel's light.

Although it may be hard
For me to understand,
I need to learn of Jesus
And follow his command.
My Heav'nly Father loves me, too;
I know it from within.
My spirit knows no handicap;
One day I'll be with Him.



A Portrait of John Andrew

Ann Romish
Portland, Oregon

On June 16th, we celebrated your birthday--your twenty-third. As I reflect on your life, I want to tell you of our love for you.

You were born on Father's day, such a beautiful baby! Our lives were fulfilled to have you. We named you for your father and two grandfathers. As you grew, your soft blond curls encircled your head, and your blue eyes shone brightly.

When we entered your room after nap-time, we noticed that you didn't respond to us, especially if you were looking out the window. In the kitchen, sitting in your jumpchair between the half-finished partitions, you didn't turn around as we passed behind you. Your dad suspected something was wrong, and we talked to Dr. Baty, who replied, "Just watch him."

Soon your first birthday arrived, and your twelve-year-old friend Rosalyn Reiser came for birthday cake. Sitting in your high chair, you leaned forward and vomited across the dining room. We cleaned you and the floor up and whisked you off to bed.

The next day you seemed fine, and after our morning routine I put you down for a nap. I was wearing "jeans," a pair your dad had bought me on our honeymoon from the first J. C. Penney store in Kemmer, Wyoming. I was scrubbing the dining room floor when I heard you stirring. I got you up and took you into the bathroom to change you. Off went the overalls, next the plastic pants, and out slid the pins. Opening the diaper to remove it, I saw that it was bright red, full of fresh blood. Quickly, I dropped it into the toilet, picked you up, and laid you face down--in case of vomiting--so you wouldn't choke, and ran for the telephone. Dr. Baty wasn't in, but Dr. Solomon, who was on call, agreed to see us immediately.

Realizing I couldn't drive, I called a taxi and wrapped you up. Dr. Solomon couldn't find anything wrong, but he sent us to the Floating Hospital in Boston. The taxi ride down Storrow Drive along the river failed to bring me the joy that it usually did. I just wanted to know what was wrong!

After we arrived at the hospital, an intern insisted on taking you away to examine you. I called your dad and waited for him to come and be with us.

I realized in horror that I had on a pair of "jeans"--twenty-three years ago women didn't wear them and certainly not in a Belmont doctor's office or a Boston hospital. This added to my anxieties.

After that day, I didn't wear them again for twenty years; they had become a symbol of pain and anxiety.

Your dad came and was relaxed. Because no one would give us any information, he decided to go home while I stayed. Before long, he was back. Seeing the toilet bright red with a limp diaper alarmed him, confirming the fact that I hadn't over-reacted. He came with Evan Ivie, and you were given a blessing. With little information, the staff insisted that we leave the hospital and return in the morning.

We returned to find your arms tied with gauze to the sides of the crib and an I.V. needle in you. The doctor told us that you had an intersusception, where the bowel becomes blocked, and we would have to wait to see if you needed surgery. They mentioned the second complication, which they assured us was not related to the first. Your eardrums had ruptured from an ear infection.

It was five very long days before we could bring you home again. We were grateful that you hadn't needed surgery. The bowel corrected itself, and the ears healed with antibiotics. However, we both felt that this was only the beginning of a long process. Dad and I wanted different medical help.

We called Rosalyn's father, a child psychiatrist, and asked for the name of a pediatrician to see us through what turned out to be some difficult years. T. Barry Brazleton began to consult with us. Several weeks later, because of our questioning, he set up an appointment for us at Children's Hospital in the Speech and Hearing Clinic. It was a warm summer day, and the three of us went. The clinician led us into a booth and put earphones on your head. I held you while he watched through the window and put various levels of sound through the headphones. After awhile, he signaled that we were finished. The charts were laid out, and in a monotone voice he recited that you were profoundly deaf. I stopped hearing and not much more was said. Somehow we arranged to have you fitted for a hearing aid in several weeks, hoping that amplification would keep you better in touch with your environment. We drove home without much communication.

That afternoon, before Dad returned to work, I remember his holding you on his lap in the Boston rocker. A shaft of sunlight filtering through the sunroom windows fell on both of you. Dad looked at me and said, "But he's so perfect, how can he be profoundly deaf?" I realized

that I was seeing but the tip of the iceberg of sorrow in that remark.

In September of that year, we took the train west. Something made you laugh out loud in the depot in Chicago. Our joy was greater than yours. Since that time, we've shared years of therapy, hearing aids, special schools, and visits to a variety of specialists in the United States. We all learned and adjusted.

Seven years ago this August, we moved to Portland. Dad bought a house close to Cleveland High School, where the Regional Program for the Deaf was located. We felt joy at your being able to finally walk to school and be in a "public school." Five months after you began, your teacher Mike Boyd contacted me and said, "I don't think John is seeing signs in his peripheral vision." I inquired whom to call, and after a series of phone calls, I had an appointment with an ophthalmologist, Dr. Weleber. It was spring break, and we used the social worker from the Commission for the Blind as an interpreter to facilitate the fluency of questions. After the visual field test, before we'd talked to the doctor, she said casually, "Well, he's already legally blind by that test."

We began anew. You and Dad and the girls went to Washington, D.C., to better understand what deaf-blindness or Usher's Syndrome is. I stayed home to care for Thomas, who had had an accident. For a year, Bob de Walt counseled with all of us while we shared grief, anger, fear, and sadness. You let us know how you felt when you said, "It's okay to be deaf, but not blind."

Last Saturday night, you tucked your arm around me at the airport. The pride and twinkle of your blue eyes radiated to all of us. You said, "I know, Mother; I'll say my prayers," and after a round of hugs you departed, alone at 1:30 A.M., to the International Deaf-Blind Conference in Washington, D.C. Next you are to spend a week in Boston visiting old friends and seeing the changes.

You have gained independence, continued to get education, and discovered that you can travel long distances alone. Look at your accomplishments and the joy in life, and continue to go forward. You have wonderful determination. Despite where the road of life goes, "You can do it!" We love you, we pray for you, we weep with you, we laugh with you, but most of all we know that you will continue to have a wonderful life. When you need us, we are here.



Denial is Expensive

Deborah Sirotkin Butler
Arlington, Massachusetts

To Samuel

Sleeping
you are an angel
peaceful and perfect.
The memory of today's violence
gone
the memory of failure
erased.



Disabilities and handicaps--you would think that I would have written long before the deadline. After all, I have had more than enough experience with both.

For me, the most difficult transition was through the state of denial. I did not wish to believe that I was different, defective, singled out. So, for a number of years I ignored the differences between myself and other people. Then, when I had to have a gynecological exam, the doctor told me that I had to go to a specialist. It seems that I was so deformed internally that he could not treat me. In fact, he became somewhat hysterical. Doctor led to doctor. My mother sought the records of her retired physician. Yes, I was DES exposed and affected.

For those of you who did not catch the media coverage of the "DES Daughter" when the story came out in 1976, a brief background. DES was a chemical prescribed to women in the 1950s who had had difficulty

conceiving or who had had miscarriages. The chemical companies had advertised it heavily to doctors. It had become clear by 1974 that not only did this drug not prevent miscarriage, it caused birth defects of the urogenital system and a much higher risk of cancer to the offspring of the women who took it, as well as a higher risk of uterine cancer to the women for whom it was prescribed.

Well, as I was newly divorced, beginning law school, and had no intention of ever developing intimacy with anyone again, the possible reproductive problems did not bother me. Neither did having a deformed cervix (multiple openings, areas of non-muscle tissue, and so forth). Cancer, on the other hand, became a smoky presence in my dreams.

The diagnosis was made in 1976. In 1978, I tested precancerous--possible cancer in situ. I joined a lawsuit. I had a core of my deformed cervix removed. I waited. One small removal of tissue, and there have been no further bad biopsies or pap smears. I was lucky; denial can be expensive.

However, I did remarry. I became pregnant, and I attempted to continue with "business as usual" with the exception of allowing my doctor to place me on disability leave from my job at twelve weeks pregnant. When the insurance company allowed it, I should have become nervous. Insurance companies are not notorious for generosity.

I continued to go to law school. I was due on September 5, 1981. Alas, I began hard labor on June 21, 1981. From that day until August 6, 1981, I was hospitalized. The drug Yupotar was used to control my uterus. Unfortunately, that drug caused hallucinations as well as a massive depression. Samuel was born on July 31, after seven bouts of hard labor and several periods of extended IV drug therapy.

Yes, I survived. But, had I not attempted to go about my life as though nothing were different, much may have been different.

During my second pregnancy, I was a nervous vegetable. I went into counseling. I also did not lift anything over five pounds. Because Samuel was a hyperactive child, no one in my ward is home during the day, and I have a semi-reformed workaholic husband, I lived in a pigsty during my pregnancy. Whereas this did not add to my morale, I was able to keep my hospital stay to a week this time.

And, there have been medical advances. Let me just say that having a baby under difficult circumstances in Massachusetts made my treatment in Michigan look like the dark ages in comparison. Don't let anyone tell you that all hospitals or all doctors are alike. That's rubbish. Who treats you and where you get treated are matters of life and death. Just because one doctor says "Impossible" or "There is nothing we can do" does not make it true. Ultimately, self-protective choices of physicians, care locations, and personal habits make the difference between progress and safety, on one hand, and hopelessness and pain, on the other.

So, if there is a "hopeless" problem in your life, or the life of a loved one, the first thing is to accept that it will not just go away. The very next is research, research, research.

Find out all you can about the condition. Educate your caregiver, if necessary and possible, and find another who is working in that area of need.

Again, I ought to know. My firstborn, who came into the world with such mess and travail, is himself disabled exotically. And so the process continues. For right now, in fact, I am using Children's Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital, and a research team located at the Shriver Center as our support system. And, mind you, the responsibility is still mine. I keep journals, ask questions, and read and read and read. There is no end in sight.

But, at least, by admitting the problem and taking responsibility for dealing with that problem, I am seeing that the best I can imagine takes place.



A Special Spirit

Debra G. Compton
Green River, Wyoming

"Mrs. Compton, will you please sign this surgical consent form for your daughter's foot amputation?" The nurse asked this matter-of-factly as if I were signing permission for my daughter to attend physical education. How could she be so insensitive? And yet, as a nurse myself, I wondered how many times I had also seemed indifferent to my patients. She couldn't possibly know how difficult this moment was for me.

Our youngest child, Marilyn, was born with several defects in her right leg. One of the bones in the lower leg, the fibula, was missing, and the other bones were shorter than the other leg. Her foot was also deformed. Because of these deformities, her foot would never function properly.

My husband and I first heard the dreaded word *amputation* when Marilyn was one week old. Prior to this, we had been assured that she would only need a few minor surgeries to correct the problem. I was devastated. How could they do this to my baby? But as we investigated further, the best doctors advised us that after years of experimenting with different surgeries, amputation produced the best results. Soon after the surgery she would be fitted with her first prosthesis--artificial leg. Subsequently, she would receive new prostheses as needed during her growing years. The doctors tried to reassure me that she would be able to lead a normal life, but I wasn't convinced. As a mother, I worried about her appearance and acceptance by her peers. After fasting and prayer, though, my husband and I knew that we had to follow the recommendation. We were relieved that the surgery would not have to be done until she was a year old. During this year of waiting, as I watched her grow into a normal, healthy child, I realized that she was a miracle.

The lowest point occurred for me when I first heard the word *amputation*. As a nurse, I had seen amputations performed, and I almost became ill when I thought of

the surgeons doing this to my baby. Often my friends would try to make me feel better by saying, "It could be worse," and I wanted to scream, "No, it can't!" Even though they sometimes said the wrong things, the support of my family and friends was crucial; I knew they cared. One of the orthopedic surgeons in our area referred us to a family whose seven-year-old son had been born with the same defect in both his legs. It was very helpful for us to see how well he had adjusted. He showed us his prostheses, and we were amazed that he was taking gymnastics in school!

However, I still worried about Marilyn's appearance. We were able to visit a twenty-one-year-old BYU student who had also had her foot amputated and wore a prosthesis. I was impressed with her beauty, strength, and acceptance of her problem. In fact, she didn't really feel that she had a handicap. She showed us her prosthesis, and it really did look like her normal leg. She was planning on going on a mission in the near future and felt completely comfortable wearing dresses every day. I found strength from this and from talking with parents of handicapped children. I felt a special bond with these people that hadn't been there before.

The experiences of these young people helped me become more accepting of Marilyn's situation. As the day of her surgery approached, however, my emotions started surfacing. I started worrying about how we would all cope with the surgery. Marilyn was still so young to be going through such a traumatic experience. Because the hospital policy prevented me from staying in the hospital at night, I had to deal with our first separation as well. I was, however, able to make arrangements to be with her from her first waking moments until she fell asleep at night.

I realize now that you are never prepared for the impact of surgery. As I watched the nurse take Marilyn's sleeping form from my arms and disappear behind the surgical doors, my heart sank. I was

shocked when I saw the bandage on her leg for the first time and realized that her foot was really gone. Nothing can prepare you for this. I had dreaded seeing Marilyn in pain, but I was again reminded of how quickly children bounce back from surgery. Marilyn needed very little pain medication and started crawling around almost immediately.

Marilyn walks with a noticeable limp, but most people notice her blonde, curly hair first. If people have questions, a simple explanation about her problem and the prosthesis is usually sufficient. It has been a joy to watch her brother and sister and others accept her as just a regular, everyday child. We know that she will have difficult times in her life because of her handicap, but we also know that we will all have the help of our Heavenly Father at these times.

I wish other people in similar circumstances had the knowledge that the gospel provides to help them deal with their situation. In one of the most sensitive articles dealing with the handicapped child that I have read, Elder James E. Faust recounts the story of the blind man in John 9:1-3 ("The Works of God," *Ensign*, November 1984). When Jesus saw a man who had been blind from birth, the disciples wanted to know if the man or his parents had sinned to cause this affliction. Jesus answered, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Elder Faust suggests that the works of God are often manifested in handicapped people by the way many are able to adjust and compensate for their limitations. This has certainly been true in Marilyn's case. There are times when I have to remind myself that she is handicapped when I watch her walk and run.

Marilyn is a blessing. She has helped us develop a keener sensitivity to others with problems. We also find that we are more accepting of others and look for their strengths and what is in their hearts. We feel so privileged to have Marilyn in our family. Indeed, the works of God have been made manifest in her.



There's a joke going around about how many Relief Society sisters it takes to screw in a light bulb. The answer is three—one to screw in the light bulb and two to serve refreshments.

Not all Relief Society sisters are "into" refreshments, but those of us who are could get an inferiority complex. Although compassionate service and casseroles often seem synonymous and a pair of visiting teachers enroute to the new woman in the ward would seem undressed without some sort of edible offering, those who enjoy cooking also have to put up with "Tsk, tsk, isn't there something more valuable you could be doing with your time than making homemade noodles?" Then there's all those subtle and not so subtle talks, lessons, and seminars that trace everything from obesity to spiritual lethargy back to what and when we eat.

Well, I think it's high time for those of us who love cooking to stop mumbling under our breaths when asked to name our talents.

Now, I'm not defending all that frantic scurrying about preparing sugar slush and cream-cheese-chocolate-gooey-squares that seems to climax nearly every fireside, board meeting, and open house. "Caloric Gorges" are entirely different from the type of constant nourishment to the body that is an integral part of even our most sacred gospel commitments. It may well be that in the celestial world one may pursue genealogy for five or six thousand years without a break, but on this earth, if you don't eat, you won't even make it to the bookstore to buy a pedigree chart.

As we mortals discern between good and evil, we often need to be able to "run and not be weary," either from physical temptation or from bad habits. Obeying the health code outlined in D&C 89 promises power to do just that. It also blesses us with the ability to pull down wisdom and great treasures from heaven and promises protection from the destroying angel. In ten years of teaching gospel doctrine courses, I've never found a single scripture promising anything like that for cleaning under the fridge.

I'm familiar with the Mary and Martha scenario, and I'm convinced that Martha's "shortcoming" was not that she was preparing supper for guests, but rather, the

manner in which she was doing it (i.e., "cumbered about" and "troubled about many things.") Although Luke doesn't detail what followed, we can probably safely assume that after the sermon was completed, the guests ate.

Several other times in the New Testament, food is used as a powerful teaching aid. On at least two occasions, the Savior knew that His audience would be unable to absorb His teachings and arrive at home in a positive spirit if they were hungry—thus the miracles of bread and fishes. The final hours of His mortal ministry included an intimate supper, and after His resurrection, He dined again with those same friends as He admonished them to "Feed my sheep." Such juxtaposition of physical and spiritual hunger illuminated at once both the keys to healthy mortality and the steps to eternal life.

As a child I knew as soon as I opened the back door after school that someone had either been born or died by the smell of mother's famous "Hamburger-Bean Casserole," baking in the oven. I awoke on the morning of my grandmother's funeral with the house filled with the same tomato-y, brown sugar fragrance. Although we all chastized her for baking on the day of her own mother's funeral, my mother said it made her feel better. I have to admit, her baking seemed totally right. Along with many other salads and casseroles, my mother's dish was served by Relief Society sisters after the service that afternoon. For me, that casserole was a very poignant reminder of on-going life, mortal and immortal.

By the same token, the mothers of new babies are often the recipients of meals prepared by Relief Society women. Contemporary Mormon sisters may not stand literally beside the woman in travail as our foremothers did, but they try to be there as soon as possible with nourishment and support and welcome for a new spirit. In arrivals and departures, women stand as "keepers of the gates"—nurturers for spiritual and physical needs in the passage from one sphere to another.

Some of the most deeply moving discussions in my life have taken place over a meal shared by a loved one. Also, preparing and participating in a day of fasting has special implications for me as I compare it with the labor and reward of preparing food for the body.

I find it impossible to be fluent in all areas of homemaking. Only under hypnosis will my children ever be able to recall any article of clothing I have made them, and our family garden is currently a patch of rhubarb gone to seed. My husband has to sew up the hem of his new pants or take them to a tailor. I do not spend my free time reading up on his occupation nor do I pick up his socks. I'm also not "into" sack lunches, so the children take their turns making their own.

Even so, if I'm in a mood on a cold blustery day, I might make chili from scratch or chicken and dumplings (so we can sing "She'll Be Coming Around the Mountain" with new meaning). At just the right time some afternoon I might bake cinnamon rolls so they'll waft alluring fragrances halfway down the block to meet the kids on their way home from school. Perhaps I'll mess up the whole kitchen making fresh strawberry jam from berries that the children and I crawled for at a farm out in the country or create a gingerbread monument that leaves molasses and spice clinging to the air. Maybe I'll get up at 5:30 A.M. some morning and put together bran muffins and fruit soup for breakfast—just because I feel like it. Maybe I'll invite some friends over for my famous Mexican Extravaganza, which takes three days to prepare, dirties every dish in the house, and includes everything from burros to burritos to homemade tortillas.

I can sanely do all of this if I'm motivated by enjoyment rather than by "shoulds and oughts" and only as long as it is done without my becoming "cumbered with much serving." Simply stated, when a cook finds that cooking is personally fulfilling as well as necessary for survival, it becomes a transference of love—no less lovely and needed than needlepoint or herb gardens or novels or a paycheck.

So those with white thumbs (and flour-y counters and sticky fridge handles and crumb-y floors), turn on that food processor with pride! I've decided that when I die, I want someone to read Robert Frost's poetry at the funeral. And I hope, for goodness sake, that somebody will remember the "Hamburger-Bean Casserole" because no matter where I am, I'll know that when I smell it baking, everything left behind and all that lies ahead will be in good hands.

The Sporadic Genealogist

Lou Ann Crisler
Laie, Hawaii

Sometimes the Lord moves in mysterious ways. But I get the feeling He is moving me backwards. Let me tell you what happened.

Now, I am what you would call a sporadic genealogist. Off again, on again, more off than on. But this last Regional Conference (Presidents Benson and Hunter in person) spurred me on to greater efforts. It is not as though I have the usual excuses. None of the general clichés work. "Aunt Sarah" hasn't done mine. I'm the only member in my immediate family. My ancestors are not "behind the Iron Curtain" or "Lamanites": a child of the American melting-pot, that's me. My husband is no obstacle: an eighth generation Mormon, one line back to Adam complete with documentation. When he walks into a genealogical library, the books fling themselves off the shelves, open to the pertinent pages. So I decided to sit down upstairs and send some inquiries to those twenty or more names and addresses that I had copied six months ago in Salt Lake City.

Children were disposed of--three to school; eleven-year-old son home "sick" (but that's another story, and anyway an eleven-year-old can certainly entertain himself for an hour); four-year-old off to pre-school (water fun day, name duly pinned to towel); and two-year-old outside with pal playing (good for at least half an hour before blood is drawn). What could be better?

Begin now, get the envelopes, open the genealogy suitcase (I really don't have that much, but my husband's full one looks so impressive that I like to keep up appearances), find a black pen, settle for a pencil (wait, there's a pen hidden in my sewing box, one of the two foolproof

places to hide things from children--the other is underneath a stack of laundered clothing--neither place will ever be bothered voluntarily), run down stamps (rats, they're all gone).

Oh, well, I will write the letters today and mail them next week after payday. Paper is flying. I feel so righteous. I think of those people beyond the veil cheering. I put an SASE in each envelope reminding myself not to seal them until I get the return stamps on.

"Mom! You better come downstairs. Lyman [the two-year-old] has made a big mess!" This from my "sick" eleven-year-old.

"Well, clean it up!" I scream, gently, of course; my mind on greater things.

"Mom, you better come. I can't."

I have a 10:00 A.M. meeting anyway, and at 10:30 I have to pick up the pre-schooler. Buoyed by the spirit of Elijah, I trip lightly down the stairs. . . .

"EEEEEEEEK!" Two-year-old Lyman has pulled down a box of powdered sugar and sprinkled the whole thing, which of course was full, on the living room carpet. While taking it off the table, he managed to spill a cup of water as well, making the equivalent of icing on the chair and floor, not to mention the layer covering him from stem to stern.

Now, you may ask, why was the powdered sugar and water on the table? This was the same question my husband asked when I reported the incident to him. I refuse to repeat my answer in full. Let it suffice that the remnants of breakfast has not been dealt with in my fervor to save my kindred dead.

Where was Heavenly Father when I needed Him? Or because He must have been rather busy, how about Heavenly Mother? Wasn't there a spare angel handy to "inspire" me to stop my work and go downstairs? I'm reminded of a neighbor, also a mother of six, who arranged her schedule so she could finally get to the temple. Her son knocked a tooth out while she was gone. They called her home in the middle of her session. Where is the justice?

Back to the mess at hand. First, I send the kid upstairs to be bathed by his sick brother. Then I grab the vacuum. Because one pipe extension broke last week, I play the Hunchback of Notre Dame, scrubbing the carpet with a two-foot-long pipe. I discover immediately that a vacuum does not seriously affect powdered sugar. I can see my options are either to shampoo the area or let the ants come and carry it away. (At this point, I vote for the ants.) After ten minutes of vicious vacuuming, I decide people will just have to assume the light and dark patches are a pattern.

Now to tackle the icing. YUCK! Four moppings later, I still stick to the floor when I walk. There is no way we can use the dining room tonight. How about a picnic on the back porch?

Oh! Tonight is Relief Society Work Meeting. We are tying quilts, and I have the Mini-Household Tip for the evening. I was planning to show the many uses of plastic bags. You know, instant rubber gloves, bean bags, disposable mixing bags, and so forth. Right! Now putting one over my head is high on the list.

Great-great-grandmother, do you suppose the Genealogical Society accepts forms glued together with powdered sugar?

Anemic Annie or Meat vs. Meet

Jean E. Lyman
Los Alamos, New Mexico

"Good morning, Sister White," the bishop welcomed me into his office. "Please, have a chair over here. Sit right down; you look tired."

"Thanks, Bishop," I signed, slumping into the chair. "You know I guess I am rather tired. I just don't seem to have much enthusiasm or energy these days."

With a concerned look, the bishop sat across the desk and asked, "Is it your family? I know that taking care of them and doing all the many things you do with them must take a lot of time and energy."

"Oh, that's not it at all," I defended. "They are a real source of strength to me. I do enjoy the times that we are able to spend together. As a matter of fact, those times together are precious and few some weeks with all the various activities in which everyone is involved. You know," I thought out loud, "when we are together as a family, it seems to be a very positive and strengthening time for all of us. It is when everyone is running in different directions to a planning meeting, a hike, a rehearsal or a day of stake meetings . . . that's when I really get worn out. I tend to feel fragmented--because I feel like the whole family is fragmented. What I want for my family, and in my own life, is the gospel--not a social club."

"Well, the activities are important," reminded the bishop. "It is important to support those various events. Besides, those meetings where we plan the meetings are an integral part of keeping the Church running."

"That may be so," I sighed, "but I usually don't derive strength and positive feelings when I become overloaded with a myriad of activities and meetings."

"My dear sister," he questioned, "then how do you derive inspiration and strength for your life?"

"Well," I paused (reflecting on how to share special feelings,) "through prayer. I am really grateful for the power of prayer . . . and for the scriptures. I do enjoy reading in the scriptures. I find that when I take the time to read and study in the scriptures, my spirit is quite rejuvenated." (Oh, dear, I always feel a little embarrassed after I bare my soul like that.)

"That's wonderful," he said giving a table a slap. "I'll bet you really enjoy the Relief Society lessons!"

I gulped, I sighed, I breathed deeply, and I couldn't say a thing.

"You know," he went on, "the scriptural study, the in-depth research presentations, the . . . meaty . . . material, the gospel topics, the stimulating discussions, the profound insights, the . . ." his voice began to trail off as if he were dreaming.

"No, bishop," I cried, "you're dreaming!"

"Oh, a-a-am, excuse me--it's been so long since I've had a good gospel-related lesson--you know, the various activities and all the meetings--oh," he sighed.

"It's not like that, Bishop. That's what the sisters want, but it is not like that at all," I cried. (Then my words and feelings just flooded out and spilled out all over the place!) "As I said earlier, what I want, what I need, from the Church is the gospel of Christ. That's what it is all about. I crave a lesson that will send me home thinking about it instead of forgetting about it before I reach home. I need stimulation to search and study on my own. I would like to know what the other sisters think and how they feel. I want the Church and Relief Society to make a difference in my life. Oh, not just having more meetings,

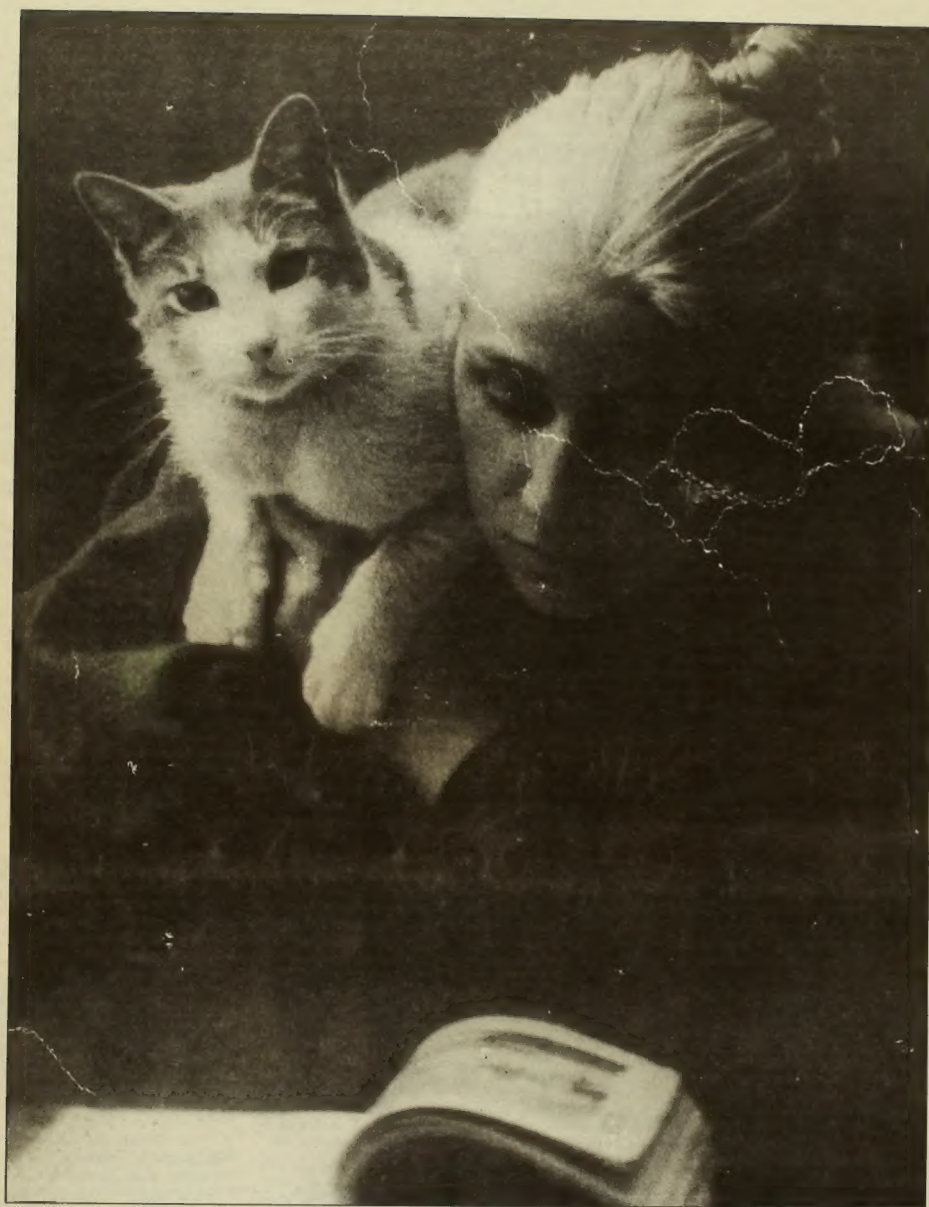
but more quality, more prayer and study put into the lessons. I need to discuss the gospel. I need to be taught the things that Christ taught--the really important things. I . . . I need meat!"

"Oh, yes," sighed the bishop, "meat!"

The flood gates were open, and my feelings streamed forth. "We need real lessons for the real sisters in our ward. Studying the teachings of Christ, coming to understand justice and mercy, learning of the resurrection and the atonement, how it affects me here and now, that's what we should be learning. I somehow feel that Christ would never have devoted one of His teaching lessons to making a list of activities appropriate for the sabbath day--quite the opposite! Instead, we should spend our time coming to an understanding and appreciation of the sacrament, the restoration of the gospel, the doctrine of faith, or the gathering of Israel. We would do a more in-depth study of the Book of Mormon, or the gospels, or any of the scriptures. We could share our feelings about prayer, we could study. . . ."

"Yes, yes," cried the bishop. "I really understand what you are saying. You have helped me realize that I have those same needs. Perhaps all too often our lives become diluted with too much milk and if we are not careful, we'll become a rather anemic group. I'm sure glad you talked with me this morning," he smiled. "You have helped me a lot. Perhaps I can encourage more gospel-oriented topics for our sacrament meetings. Let's share our scriptural insights in our classes. Change the diet carefully, but do what you can to add more meat. Thank you. Yes, thank you, Sister White."

As I walked out of his office, I stopped by the water fountain, took an iron pill, and headed for Relief Society.



Quiet Lights

Zina Nibley Peterson
Provo, Utah

Fiction

Caroline had been out walking on the beach the night before, and it had rained. There had been, at one point, a time when the rain had stopped and she had looked up at a star--directly at it, as if she had known it was there, in the center of the only gap in the clouds, which she also had known somehow, instinctively, was there. The star had held her gaze--she thought briefly that it was probably a planet, actually--and it was so... so natural and right, like the line of her eyesight was a tiny, dimensionless line of tangent that just skimmed the Earth at one point--herself--and--and headed straight through the center of that light and kept going forever into space.

The rest of the sky had been clouds, and in a moment from her contact with the star it had begun to rain again and she'd thought of nice hot ginseng tea and her cat. She knew that when she got home she would take her cat and her quilt and some ginseng and fold her legs up onto the couch and look out the window with all the lights off, and maybe think of a brilliant idea or two. And she would listen to some soft jazz. Not the type with all the horns and saxophones and pianos and string basses, but the new kind with electric flutes and nice, calm guitars. Soft jazz. It would be a lovely evening.

But now, she was filling the left side of the sink to wash the dishes from last night. Not the cup and the saucer, but all the dishes; the three mugs, three saucers, spoons, the butterknife.

She didn't know how they had found her house, quite. But they were young and looked wet and were, frankly, such a novelty, such an oddity, and so obviously not used to the rain and cold, let alone infatuated with them, that she had asked them in, a little surprised at herself.

And they had been surprised at something, too. Caroline had realized that all the lights were still off in her house. Embarrassed, she had toyed with the idea of telling them that the storm had put down a power line, but it was rain, not a storm, and the stove was electric, they could see that, and the teapot was shrilling out a steady fog of steam. So she had mumbled something about having been in the other room and smiled at them rather awkwardly and moved to the switch, the quilt still over her shoulders, to turn the light on.

"Some things just aren't good technique," she said aloud now, and tried to picture herself doing something different last night.

The two girls had come into her kitchen and stood humbly and gratefully in their dripping overcoats with stocking legs underneath. She asked them why they were wearing skirts in October, and out here, and they had told her it was a rule, required.

The sink was now full of suds and water and as Caroline immersed a mug a wisp of steam escaped from under the parted bubbles and the mug filled with water and sank. She put the other mugs in. Then she put the silver and the saucers in.

In the front room, the telephone rang. She wiped her hands on a short blue towel as she went to pick it up.

"Hello--"

"Hello, Caroline, August. How's the kid?"

Caroline didn't speak for a moment.

"I'm fine, fine. It's been rainy, but you know how the beach looks in the weather. Where are--"

"Love it, I love it. Listen, I'm about two hours outside of Boston right

now--oh, sorry, didn't mean to talk over you like that."

"It's ok, you go ahead. Talk."

"I just called to say I'll be in the area for a while and say how are you and to say hello. And to talk. And to say that New York City has whole streets full of theaters and music and dance that are just sick for lack of you. For over a month New York hasn't seen your face. Would you like to come?"

"I'd love to. Let's, August. I miss the city sometimes. I miss it. But--" She didn't finish her sentence.

"What?" said August.

"No, I didn't say anything--August?"

"Yes, Carol?"

Caroline paused for a moment, deciding. "Didn't you say once that you knew some Mormons?"

"What?"

Caroline folded the phone cord back on itself with her fingers and thumb. "Mormons. Haven't you been to Utah?"

"I have cousins in Utah, on my mother's side. They aren't Mormons, though. They own some land for... sheep, I think."

"Well, do you?"

"Yes. Backstands or Backsteds or something--"

"No, I mean, do you know anything about Mormons?"

"As much as I care to."

"What do you mean?"

"Carol--" August's voice had the beginnings of an irritated chuckle.

"I met some last night," said Caroline.

"Oh?"

"Yes. Missionaries. Girls. I was surprised; I thought--"

"Girls?"

"Yes."

"They weren't Mormons, then, I don't think, Caroline. Mormons have all men missions."

"No, August, they were. I didn't think so either, but they told me they were just as full time and official as the boys."

August didn't say anything for a moment. "You're sure?"

"August! They gave me a *Book of Mormon*. They are Mormons."

"Girls, huh? Huh! I didn't think they were hiring girls now."

"Well, they are. I invited them in."

"What? Sorry, didn't catch that last--"

"I said," she said slowly, "I invited them in. When they came last night. It was awfully wet, and they have to wear skirts, even here, in this weather. And I was having some hot ginseng myself so I invited them in."

August chuckled. "Did they sell you a flower, too?"

"No, no..." said Caroline, not laughing, as she thought she should. "They didn't sell me anything. They referred to each other by last name and 'sister,' everything was 'sister'; 'Sister This and Sister That' and," here she did

smile for August, though he couldn't see her, "And they were ever so eager to turn down my offers of tea. So they could read to me out of their book of doctrine where it says for Mormons to abstain from dietary pleasures--no hot drinks." Caroline let out a tiny laugh. "They don't have hot drinks or caffeinated drinks. But I made them some hot cocoa and you should have seen them drink that down. I thought it was funny how they said no hot--"

"Caroline. You didn't invite them back, did you?"

"Well, aren't you concerned for my well-being! They don't bite, August. They seem like very sweet, very sincere girls who want to do what they're doing. They're harmless."

"That's what people said about the Jonestown crew."

"Oh, please, August. They're members of a big American church. A little too gung-ho for my tastes, maybe..."

"Gung-ho isn't the word. Listen, a friend of mine has a book you should read, I'll bring it up tonight, ok?"

Caroline didn't say anything. She closed her eyes for a moment and gently moved her head back and forth. Then she said, "August. Let's just let the thing go, all right? There were two wet, cold girls out in the woods or on the beach or wherever they came from last night. And I let them in and gave them something to eat and drink. They thanked me, and when they were dry, they left. They did not smoke funny cigarettes. They did not smoke normal cigarettes. They did not wear sheets, they didn't chant; they were very quiet, in fact. They did not shave their heads and both had taken a fairly recent bath, I am sure. I am not changed, August; I didn't let them feed me a cookie or marry me off to a polygamist."--she remembered--"In fact, they told me that not only is polygamy against their church, they are not letting black people into their temples. Even."

August's voice lost its humor and irritation and gained an anxious edge.

"How much did they tell you?"

"Oh, August. Honestly. They were only here about an hour." She twisted a strand of her coarse red hair in figure eights between two fingers. "They told me that they believe the Mormon church came straight from God to Joseph Smith. Well, actually, it's more complicated than that, but basically. Straight from God. That was kind of, I don't know, eerie."

Caroline paused. Her black and brown Siamese cat came from the kitchen to arch its back against her shin, and she stooped to scratch its head.

"Why's that?" said August, "Why eerie?"

Caroline sat down on the floor and gathered the big cat into her lap. It purred and gently kneaded its claws into Caroline's let.

"I don't know, August. It just was. They spoke so honestly, they believed it so much."

"Indoctrination."

"Testimony. They called it testimony, like in a court, like they were under oath."

Caroline's cat put its chin down between its paws. The vibrations from its throat tickled her knee.

"It was like... they didn't have the slightest speculation--there was really no room to argue any points of belief with them. You can't deny it when they put it that way. You can't say, no, you

Quiet Lights

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)



don't believe that. For them, it's true. I mean," she stroked the cat's back, "I'm sure there are explanations for somebody having a vision of God, I think. Joseph Smith could have had a concussion and really believed that he saw God, and I think anybody could believe it if it happened to them, but. That was what--a hundred years ago, more, and those girls were really, really convinced--"

"Indoctrinated," said August.

"Maybe, said Caroline, pressing the cat's soft ears down to its head, "But it goes further than that, even. It's rather spooky, how much they believe it. Like I believe the sun shines or that I like my cat, here, or that I can pick up a phone and call you or you'll call sometimes, they believe that they can all--no, everybody--can talk to God. I mean, prayer isn't just prayer to them, August. They think this Supreme Being listens to their wishes and grants them."

August spoke tiredly. "Caroline, does this Mormon thing make you as uncomfortable as it does me?"

"Well, not as... I don't think it's so much that I'm--"

"You're uncomfortable, Caroline."

"Maybe, August."

"I'll get that book for you, and listen, if it makes you uncomfortable, it can't be all right, can it?"

"I don't know," said Caroline, "that play you took me to last May made me uncomfortable."

"That was art, Carol. Different. Believe me."

"Well," Caroline scratched under the cat's jaw and it stretched out its neck for her. "We'll talk tonight, August. You've got a bill. We can go to O'Niell's Balloon, ok? No Mormons invited."

"Ok. Then. Good Girl."

The cat nipped its white fangs at Caroline's fingertip and she gently swatted it's nose.

August continued, "And don't let them in again, all right?"

"Oh, dear," said Caroline, "I already told them they could come back. I didn't think they'd take me up on it though, I live so far out of the way of everything."

"Well, that was not an intelligent thing to do, my dear, but I guess it can't be helped now. Just don't be there when they come again, because I assure you, they'll come again. Or tell them no, you're absolutely not in the least interested. And then shut the door."

"August! How rude! And maybe I am--"

"I'm serious, Caroline. They'll take any chance they can to elbow in on you. Those missionaries have been known to come back nine or ten times before the people finally give in and convert to Mormonism. Be careful."

Caroline listened to him and stroked the cat's fur backward and then forward. The cat turned its head quickly to look at her and she cupped her hand over its ears, pulling them back. It closed its eyes again and purred.

"August." She changed the phone to her other hand and other ear. "You're making more of a fuss about this than it merits. Honestly. Forget I said anything. I don't want a silly visit from two Mormon girls to change anything. Everything."

The cat suddenly stopped purring and stretched out one front paw and drew it back. Then it swung its tail around to within reaching distance and drew its tail into its mouth with the paw.

"Don't let them in again, Caroline."

"Oh, August--"

"Promise me you won't."

"You're being absolutely--"

"Caroline. I know what I'm talking about. I feel very insecure with what I know about you and Mormons, and this whole thing. Promise."

In a half second Caroline was aware that she was disgusted that August would try to make her promise to something for no reason but his own peace of mind. After all, it wasn't she who was insecure. She had been the one to have seen those girls and talked with them; seen them so wet and soppy, and so willing to be soppy, if they could just talk to her.

The cat nibbled its tail.

"August. I can take care of myself. I can defend myself against the onslaught of a couple of girls who are younger but no stronger than most nuns."

"Promise anyway."

"Now, don't say that. Why are you so protective all of a sudden? You've let me pay for dinner about half the time, you let me open my own doors, but when it comes to religion, some kind of something that takes a little thought, all of a sudden I'm a feeble little--and you have to polish up your armor and rent a white horse from somewhere so you can come riding up to my door--"

"Caroline..."

"No! August! I'll deal with this, ok?"

The line was quiet for a second.

"Look, be careful then, ok. I'm sorry."

"Don't worry about it." She said, too quickly. She breathed deeply and the cat stood up, still in her lap. "It's just that I've lived here a long time and I've faced graver dangers and survived. I really don't consider them much of a threat. And before I said anything about it to you, I promised them, that they could come back."

"Break it."

"What, is a promise made to a couple of religious fanatics not really a promise? Not binding? Or is it that they're women that bugs you? I swear, sometimes I think you think you have the corner on the market--"

"You really have a thing about the women's thing, don't you? A real chip on your shoulder?"

"She wanted to shout, 'Yes, and it's people like you who put it there!' but she didn't. The cat noticed something across the room and Caroline watched its eyes grow glassy and intent. She sighed. The cat ran off her lap and chased after what it was that fascinated it."

"Caroline. let's not fight. I'm sorry. You can do what you want. I keep forgetting that I can't change you; nothing can. I'll take you to Manhattan tonight; Time's Square."

"Time's Square's sleazy."

"Wherever you want."

Caroline thought a moment. "What if I want to go to the Mormon church?"

August didn't answer soon enough, and when he did, it was too loud to be as confident as his tone implied. "Fine," he said, "I'll take you there."

"Promise?"

"Caroline..."

"Just kidding. But. Maybe I would. Like to go there. Just to see what it's like."

"I don't like it."

"I know." She sighed again. "We'll go to that play about the nuns, or something."

"And O'Niell's Balloon."

"Of course. August."

"Yes?"

She opened her mouth, shut it, and then opened it again. She said, "What time will you come?"

"Sixish? Ok? That'll give us a little more time for the rain."

"Ok."

"And no more funny stuff, ok? From either of us."

"N--no."

"Alright, then Caroline. Six. Look beautiful."

"You too."

"Bye."

"Good bye."

Caroline replaced the receiver and was surprised at how light her hand was after releasing its weight. She glanced around the room, but the cat was not there. Slowly she unfolded her legs and stood up off the floor. Why, at this moment, she particularly detested August she did not know. She knew the reasons but not the... purpose? for her hatred.

She put her hands on her face as if to wipe some invisible water from her eyes, but she couldn't see any better after doing so. Caroline remembered her dishes, the suds now probably gone, in the sink. She walked toward the kitchen. She reached the doorway and, rather than continuing to the sink, she stopped, leaned her head against the door, suddenly sad, scared. On her table was the blue paperback with a picture of a gold angel's statue on the cover that they had left for her, given to her.

Those girls were frightened of me, she thought, but she knew that was the wrong word--not frightened. What then? She didn't know.

The suds in the sink were almost gone and there was no steam. Caroline filled the sink with fresh hot water, filled it without emptying the old water. She watched as the suds foamed up again and the water spilled over the divider into the other half of the sink; she watched as water from her face fell through the thin white bubbles without a splash.

Sisters Help and Sisters Speak

IN THE LAST ISSUE OF EXPO-NENT II, WE PUBLISHED A PLEA FOR COMFORT FROM A WOMAN WHOSE SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER HAD RECENTLY HAD AN ABORTION. THE FOLLOWING LETTERS HAVE COME OFFERING WORDS OF CONCERN AND INSIGHT. THE FIRST IS FROM JULIE NICHOLS, A GOOD FRIEND OF EXPO-NENT II, IN PROVO, UTAH. SHE WRITES:

Dear, dear sister, Doubtless you are doing some profound soul-searching here, but may I suggest that among the questions you ask yourself you include, "Why am I so distraught?" Is it because you believe that she has killed a human soul? I read, a long time ago, a comment--by a man--to the effect that "We live in a spiritual universe. The spirit of a fetus cannot be destroyed any more than the spirit of a long-lived, venerated prophet/ess can be destroyed. Surely a loving Creator would no more deny a spirit full opportunities for growth because its parents chose not to bear it to term."

This is completely from memory--I don't remember where exactly I saw it--but it helped me accept the fact that abortion is widely and commonly practiced and to believe (although we can't know, I suppose, until the next life) that each fetus so destroyed is given other opportunities for life and growth.

I have also experienced the fear of an unwanted pregnancy--and it is terrible. Fortunately for me, it turned out that I was not pregnant, but for a time I was afraid I was, and I was nearly hysterical, even though I was happily married and had had other, darling children.

I thought seriously then of abortion. I have a beloved friend, not LDS, who has had two abortions and one miscarriage. I was shocked and saddened when I knew about the abortions, which she chose in full consciousness for reasons she felt were incontrovertible, but knowing her taught me that good, intelligent people make such choices and cannot be judged as "evil" or "lost" because of those choices.

So if the reason you're so deeply grieved by the knowledge of what your daughter has done is that you feel that she is lost--to you or to God--may I suggest that it is by the grace of heaven not our place to make that judgment. Your daughter is much beloved by her Father in Heaven and must work out her own salvation--her own response to the choice that she had made.

I loved that you spoke in your letter about wanting nothing so much as to hold her. Are you in pain because she wouldn't confide in you? Then make the decision to move forward from her in the direction of deeper, fuller acceptance, so she will confide in you.

Are you in pain because you judge her or because you share her pain? The Lord said not to judge, and he said that he had descended below us all--he knows her pain and has atoned for it. Nothing is wasted. Try in your love for your young daughter to feel the love and forgiveness of the Savior for her and for you. I don't believe that she needs to suffer any more than she already has; I believe what she needs is love and help toward a productive future. Perhaps you should both be grateful that she could have the procedure done legally and safely and did not have to go to some back-alley butcher to lose both her unborn child, her ability to have more, and--possibly--her life. She is alive; she is healthy; she is learning; she is coming to understand who she is. Praise God for that and go forth in more Christ-like love together.

God bless you!

LAURIE NEWMAN DI PADOVA WRITES
THESE WORDS FROM GREENWICH, NEW YORK:

I am grateful that *Exponent* chose to print your sensitive and eloquent expression of love for your daughter during this painful time for you both. In addition to stating your love for her, you demonstrate its depth by sharing her burden and refusing to take a blaming posture towards her. At times like this, it sometimes becomes necessary to remind a parent of the need for mercy and an increase in love; for you, such reminders

are totally unnecessary. Your sorrow provides such an outpouring towards your daughter. I think that she is blessed to have you for a mother; as you seek assurance from God that everything will be all right, I think that the depth and sensitivity of your response to her provides that assurance.

Although many intense emotions, including self-doubt, anger, and guilt may prevail with you often, I'm certain that my voice joins many others in respect for you and admiration for your honesty and ability to share your daughter's sorrow and burden.

My immediate concern is for the support that you two are finding. Tragedy is often the most difficult time to seek help and love, and yet tragedy is when such support is most needed. I don't know if you've been able to talk with anyone in the Church. If not, I think that it's important that you do, and I hope that you feel you can go to your Relief Society president. As a stake Relief Society president, I witness again and again the sweet and abiding love that ward/branch presidents have for their sisters: this has genuinely surprised and touched me. So, my impulse is to suggest that you consider talking with her. (If you happen to be the Relief Society president, you may wish to consider your stake Relief Society president.)

Your anger at the law that permits abortion on girls without parental consent is not at all misplaced. Regarding any other issue that's not so politically charged, such a practice would be regarded as medically irresponsible and the target of sharp remedial legislation. Indeed, you and your daughter have been deceived, and both of you are victims.

One prime source of support on issues where women are victimized--activist women's group--is not available to you. They are not sensitive to your plight; they vigorously defend the practice of providing confidential abortions on demand. Unfortunately, they fail to see women as victims of male-dominated legislatures, a male-dominated medical profession, and the male-dominated multi-million-dollar abortion industry. (Although I resist the use of such strong rhetoric, I can think of no more apt and accurate description of the situation.) Women are placed at high risk physically and emotionally and left to hurt alone--as was your daughter. While there may be groups available to assist you, I only know of one: Women Exploited By Abortion (WEBA). You may wish to consider seeking out this group.

Although some people might maintain that my view is flawed, I feel that the tragedy of the unborn is dimmed by the intense anguish suffered by your daughter during the ordeal alone, both during the procedure and the months following, and the anguish now shared by you both. Your letter indicates a special comfort that you give to her.

Tragedy is a lonely time, and as you are well aware, this tragedy has more potential for loneliness because not everyone will understand. I sincerely hope that you and your daughter are spared such judgment. I hope that others will take advantage of this opportunity and privilege of offering comfort, love, and support to you both. And I hope that they will join with you in loving your daughter through the exercise of her free agency in making a decision with which they may not agree. For as we judge, we participate in the exploitation that already has victimized you, or as in this case, it would be the exploitation of your pain for another's self-righteousness.

EARLIER THIS YEAR WE FIELD-ED A QUESTION ASKING ABOUT POSITIVE RELIEF SOCIETY EXPERIENCES. WE RECEIVED VERY FEW RESPONSES THEN. IT IS OUR VIEW THAT THIS IS NOT BECAUSE WOMEN HAVE NO POSITIVE RELIEF SOCIETY EXPERIENCES; RATHER, WE SUSPECT THAT THEY HAVE MANY AND THAT THEY ALSO HAVE A NUMBER OF PLACES WHERE EXPRESSING THEMSELVES ABOUT THOSE EXPERIENCES IS WELCOMED AND ENCOURAGED--THUS, NO NEED TO WRITE THEM DOWN FOR EXPO-NENT II. WHEN PEOPLE HAVE FEELINGS AND NO PLACE THAT WELCOMES OR ENCOURAGES THEM TO BE EXPRESSED, THEN OUR MAIL BOX

RUNNETH OVER. FOR EXAMPLE, THE LETTERS CONTINUE TO ROLL IN FROM EX-BISHOP'S WIVES, EX-WIVES OF BISHOPS, AND WIVES OF CURRENT BISHOPS! WE PRINT FIRST THE LETTERS RESPONDING TO "WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE SPOUSE TO A BISHOP?" AND...HOW DOES ONE COPE WITH WHAT IT IS LIKE?" THEN WE WILL TURN TO A FEW LETTERS FROM THOSE JOYFUL WITH RELIEF SOCIETY.

MARIE L. SORENSON OF RENO, NEVADA, SHARES HER FEARS ABOUT WHAT CAN AND HAS HAPPENED TO WOMEN AND THEIR MARRIAGES WHEN THEY DO NOT POSITIVELY DEAL WITH SOME OF THE ISSUES RAISED WHEN THEIR HUSBANDS ARE CALLED TO SERVE IN BISHOPRICS. SHE OFFERS SOME WARNINGS:

I have had a twenty-four hour struggle with my instincts. To speak or not to speak. I have been told occasionally to be silent, but this time I feel compelled to speak out.

First, as to the matter of my qualifications to speak. I joined the Church in 1950 at the age of 31, so I had not been raised under the umbrella of "blind obedience." Since my baptism, I have served five years as Primary president, five years as M.I.A. president, twenty-five years as teacher to the youth in Sunday School, ten years as an early-morning seminary teacher. I have also served as organist, chorister, secretary, and just about every calling a woman can hold--except that of Relief Society president. I have always felt I lacked certain qualities for that calling and fortunately have been blessed with bishops who have wisely agreed with me.

Our Church subscribes to the principle of free agency. Yet, how often--with the best of motives--do our leaders sink to unfair tactics to "persuade" an individual to accept a calling. We like to believe that all our leaders function under the influence of the Holy Ghost 100% of the time, but I do not believe I am disloyal to recognize that we are not yet a celestial society and that it is quite possible for human beings to occasionally function under pressures of immediate need.

If a bishop must be obtained quickly, then the stake presidency wants to make certain that the man they choose will accept. This is really quite easy, considering how we all feel about service to the Lord. In solemn voices, they assure the man before them that they have all prayed about it and are convinced that the Lord has chosen him to be the bishop. What can he do? He can't possibly refuse a call from God.

Now, as to the wife. Maybe she feels instant panic. But what can she do? They all look at her, confident that she will ascribe to the Mormon concept, to be a helpmeet to her husband. If she refuses, think of what this means. She will understand that she is the obstacle in the path of her beloved husband's progression. No loving wife wants that on her conscience. So, without having an opportunity to receive her own personal revelation as to her capacity for this situation, she feels she must give her husband her support, and she can only hope for the best. She does her best, but sometimes that just isn't enough.

So then she is plagued with guilt and if she dare talk to anyone about it, she is told she must fast and pray. She is led to believe that her failure is some spiritual lack in her nature, and no matter what problems beset her, she is constantly tormented by the thought that if she were just more spiritual, she could cope.

We are all striving for perfection, for complete faith, and if we had all reached our desired goal, we would not have found any situation beyond our ability to withstand. But we all progress at different rates, and I am so tired of hearing well-meaning Church members pass judgment on anyone who does not quite live up to their standards of conduct.

I believe with all my heart that the man and woman are a single unit in the eyes of God and that although the man is the priesthood holder, he is under obligation to make no decision without knowing

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that he has his wife's sincere and complete support. I believe this practice should be discussed prayerfully far in advance of any acceptance of a calling as important as that of bishop.

Are there no mature men, with almost grown children, available to fulfill these leadership positions? How can a young man forced to spend most of his time away from his wife and children ever make that time up to them?

Because I believe that every member of the Church is blessed with the give of personal revelation, I believe that these young men are entitled to go to the Lord to ascertain whether or not this calling truly comes from the Him and whether or not they can fulfill the calling of bishop and still function completely in their family unit.

I believe in a loving and just God. I do not believe that He is a tyrant demanding from us the impossible. If an occasion arises when it is absolutely necessary to demand more of us than we are able to give, then I believe the Lord will step in and give us the needed faith to survive.

I am very interested in this sister and hope she might feel inclined to write to me sometime and let me know how things are with her. I am concerned because I have a dear friend who, twenty years ago, found herself in this identical situation. out of a sense of guilt she stuck it out, her husband loved being bishop and she felt like a traitor to even think of letting him know what it was doing to her. Well, she kept it all locked up inside of her, and one day about ten years ago she exploded, divorced him, left the Church and I doubt if she will ever return. Her bitterness is deep.

I do not believe the Lord expects us to risk our testimonies through bitterness. I fear guilt, bitterness and frustration very much because I know that through them, a testimony can simply fade away.

THE NEXT IS FROM FRANCES
WHITNEY-RICHARDSON OF LOS
ANGELES, CALIFORNIA:

I was moved to see the letter from the bishop's wife in "Sisters Help." It broke my heart to read it but made me feel less alone. My husband was called to be bishop the week that we returned from our honeymoon. Without retelling here the whole horrible story (and I've yet to hear worse), I can now say that we learned from the experience. Living with my husband's calling became an object lesson in enduring to the end--and I'm sure it will for this sister too--but there are several things that we can do to make life easier. Some of these ideas we discovered during my husband's tenure; others are hints from other bishops' families that my husband refused to implement. They may be useful:

1. Don't answer the telephone when the bishop is not there. There is nothing you can do for those people other than politely write down their name and telephone number, and they don't want that. If you answer the telephone every time it rings, you will never accomplish anything else. For several years, I had my own number--listed under a false name, no address. Only my relatives and old friends had this number. I answered the other phone only if I was feeling especially generous, charitable, or so lonely I didn't care who I talked to. (Our main number was listed in the Yellow Pages and was, I am sure, written on the men's room wall at the Greyhound bus station. Don't let your stake do that to you.) Some Church leaders take the phone off the hook during meals; other's don't answer after 10 P.M. We couldn't do that because of my husband's work, but I know many people who solve that problem by having separate phone lines for work and church. I believe that any emergency in the middle of the night requires an ambulance, not a bishop.

2. Have something going on in your life besides Church and babies. Anything will do; something stimulating is preferable. Forget everything they told you in MIA about your family and the Church coming first. You come first. But realize also that this is a period in your life when you may have to strive for

minimum loss rather than maximum gain. That means it might be better to dabble in some fun projects rather than strive to achieve some wonderful, but difficult goal. One bishop's wife in our stake went to real estate school. I don't think she's done anything with her license, but it put an achievement under her belt, and she made some friends outside the Church. It was refreshing.

3. Don't take a complicated calling yourself. And don't try to make the rounds of all the activities. You will never survive if you have to drag six kids to every Boy Scout Court of Honor. Conserve your energy for enduring your husband's calling.

4. Exercise regularly. A consistent attendance at aerobics class will give you benefits in relaxation that you never dreamed of. Your husband can stay at home and talk to people on the phone and watch the children while you go. I used to hit the gym to swim laps at 5:30 A.M.--right after the baby had nursed and gone back to sleep and before anyone else woke up. It was hard to get up--the water was cold--but I became less depressed and exhausted as I made the effort.

5. Don't try to be an example. I wore myself out the first three years trying to live up to cultural expectations. It's just not worth it. A friend who earned a Ph.D. in clinical psychology while her husband was a counselor in the bishopric and on the high council says the key to living your own life while in the fishbowl is not to care what other people think. I think that if you are unfailingly courteous to other people they have no claim on you for anything else (unless you are their visiting teacher).

6. If you get depressed--I mean with clinical symptoms--and it sounds to me like you have them--see a professional. Call the American Medical Association for a referral to a psychiatrist (M.D.) who specialized in medication for clinical depression. Forget LDS Social Services. Talk therapy doesn't solve depression, and it also has a way of getting back to the stake president (although marriage counseling would give you an hour with your husband every week). If your husband becomes depressed, he should go on the pills, too. Depression doesn't get better by itself, and when it does get better, it can sometimes recur cyclically. I found I felt better immediately after beginning the medication. Other people take a couple of weeks to get the benefits going. You'd be really surprised if you knew who else in the Church is taking this stuff.

7. Have a night out. This is an idea too long in coming to us. I would disappear on one evening while my husband put kids to bed and then interviewed to his heart's content; he would disappear another evening. We had consistent, set days for this. If he had to go to work or to a meeting on my night, he had to get a babysitter. Everyone learned that Tuesday night was his evening with the children, and it got him out of all kinds of things. ("I can't come over to talk to you right now--I'm taking care of the children. See me at the church on Sunday at 3:10 P.M.") I was relieved to be able to tell callers, "Thursday is his night out. I don't know where he goes. Sometimes he is gone all night. Don't bother calling back." People thought this was strange, but it was none of their business after all. He would renew himself by hiking, staying late at work, wandering through shopping malls. This idea was so successful that we still take our regular nights out.

8. Make more family time. Don't live your life around the Church anymore than you can help. It sounds as though your husband is trying to do everything. As he gains experience in bishoping, he will either break down or stop being a perfectionist in his calling. You may find you have to leave home to get any peace. There are those who will come over and knock on the door after they have been unsuccessful in reaching you by phone. Maybe they won't be able to find you at the playground. We found that Death Valley was an ideal getaway.

9. Don't have any more kids. At least not now. I've noticed that the men who have a good time being bishop don't have little children or financial worries.

Besides, if the bishop's wife gets pregnant, her stomach is public property.

10. Hang in there. The days are past when they had bishops serve for 15 years. The policy is 3-5 years now.

Did we receive any blessings from my husband's service? Yes. The main blessing was his release. Each new day we feel a joy and gratitude that we would never have known had he never served. We are especially grateful for his current calling (Young Men president). I think he finally learned moderation, which he probably would not have done otherwise.

And I learned to be assertive about my own needs and mental health. I've even had the nerve to turn down a number of callings and activities that did not suit my needs and interests. Never again will I sacrifice my sanity for the Church. That's not one of the things on the list in the temple ceremony. I have learned tolerance--a hard lesson, and one I practice weekly when well-meaning sisters snag me in the hall to introduce me to newcomers as "the former bishop's wife" (neglecting to even mention my name or that of the new arrival).

Many ward members have suggested that we were blessed with three beautiful children because my husband was the bishop. That is baloney. Lots of people have beautiful children. The blessing for our family comes in knowing that we can be strong, that can survive anything. Although our marriage will probably never be the union it could have been without those first six years of hell, we found that when it was all over there was a little something left to work and build on. There is a lot of residual damage, but we think we're going to make it.

THE NEXT SISTER, WRITING FROM
PROVO, UTAH, ABOUT THE BURDENS
SHE CARRIES AS WIFE TO A GOOD
BISHOP, ASKED THAT WE WITHHOLD
HER NAME:

I wept when I read the letter from the bishop's wife. I can certainly relate; in fact, I had to convince my husband that I hadn't written it! It rings true in so many ways.

I wish that I had some solutions. I don't, but I want this sister and all readers out there to know that her situation, and more importantly, her feelings, are more common than most of us would like to admit.

I have been a bishop's wife for a little over a year and a half, but it seems like a lot longer! (And, oh, how I hate it when I'm introduced as "the bishop's wife"!)) When new bishops are called, they are given hours and hours of training to help them in their job, but no one warns the wives what they're in for.

I can't remember a time when I've felt so unhappy for so long. As a couple, we seem farther apart than ever, rarely spending enough time together to even have a decent conversation. (There's always something "important" to be done!) So when the time is eventually forced on us, there's so much resentment built up that the dialogue is anything but friendly.

Being a bishop's wife would not be nearly so hard if I were not burdened with the conflict of being a non-traditional woman (feminist, if you will) in a traditionally doormat role. I'm restricted in what I can say (because everything reflects on the bishop) and tied down more than I've been in years because I feel someone must take care of things at home. In fairness, I must admit that I have my own interests and involvements, just to stay sane, but still, there is rarely anything that we can enjoy together. We haven't sat together in church for years because of his stake callings before this. If we get dressed up to go somewhere together, it's either a wedding or a viewing.

One of the things that I struggle with is the fact that I am expected to give so much, when I feel very little support from him in my Church duties. For instance, I was in charge of a major program in Relief Society and spent months putting it together; it was a beautiful evening, very much appreciated by the

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women in ward. Husbands, including mine, were in attendance.

When it was over, mine walked home to get the van and return to help me with some round table tops and borrowed sculptures--I thought. After all, I was six months pregnant and had told him I had a whopping headache.

When he didn't come back for a long time, I walked home to see what was going on. He was in bed asleep! To top it off, he said nothing about the program or my involvement in it, and when I finally asked three days later what he thought of it, he shrugged. "Oh, I was too tired to pay attention." Was I wrong to feel deeply hurt, even ignored?

A complicating factor was my pregnancy, which I discovered just after my husband was called as bishop. It had been many years since we'd had a baby, and the whole idea was difficult to adjust to, even though we were happy about it.

The baby has been a wonderful blessing and a delight to the entire family but having another little one around after so many years of comparative freedom has also been difficult. Even during the pregnancy, my husband seemed so preoccupied with his ward and work responsibilities that he never even asked to put his ear to my tummy and hear the baby's heart-beat as he'd done with all previous babies. I joked that if the baby came during church, he'd miss the birth in order to "preside." That wasn't too far from the truth; he was mighty relieved when the baby was delivered two hours before ward conference.

Even though I was experiencing post-baby depression, trying to adjust to the new situation and having all the kids home for summer vacation besides, my husband--the bishop--felt that it was his duty to attend every Scout and Young Women camp overnight, plus youth conference and a four-night river trip with our two older boys and their quorum. It was "business as usual" for him.

Was I wrong to feel that he was needed more at home, or that I had been slighted, or that he was taking care of everybody else in the ward at my expense? "Basket case" pretty accurately describes my condition that summer. Now, post-baby depression is just plain post-bishop depression.

Fortunately, we don't have any major problems with our children, but the little daily contests of will and seemingly constant barrage of minor incidents keep me down, especially when I am usually the one who has to deal with the problems, simply because Dad's not here.

I've come to hate Sundays, which begin with verbal fights with the 14-year-old to get up and get ready for church, and nowadays, to wear a tie. Others balk at practicing their instruments or bicker with each other, and the kitchen is strewn with cereal and the Sunday paper. I am usually feeling pretty angry by the time we get to church, and then I sit there and try to referee kids who are old enough to know better. Later, we eat dinner without Dad, who has both scheduled and unscheduled meetings and crises all day, and I referee some more.

One Sunday after his first year as bishop, my husband stayed home because of a bad cold and flu. (Although he was sure that he was indispensable at church, I convinced him not to spread it around.) Because he was home to help, the kids didn't bicker or leave the kitchen a mess, and everyone practiced without arguing. When it was time for church, my husband said, "I don't see what's so hard about Sunday mornings." I could have strangled him.

As a bishop's wife, I can honestly say that I feel angry, resentful, and used. And then I am supposed to smile and fit everyone's image of the sweet, uncomplaining bishop's wife who is enjoying so many blessings that she gladly sends her husband off to serve and greets him lovingly on his return, no matter how awful it's been in the meantime. I know there are a lot of bishops' wives in far worse situations than mine.

I cringed to hear during a Relief Society lesson, a printed statement from the manual about a Church leader's wife who complained so much every time her husband left the house that he was forced to be released from his calling, and she was eventually excommunicated. Why must we put up with such extreme examples? I wanted to scream to the women in that room that I am a person, too, and I should not have to become a non-entity in order for my husband to serve!

There is a need for balance, both in this situation and in the way others view it. I need my women friends more than ever, but some in my ward are reluctant to say things to me now that they freely did before because of my connection to the bishop. I have to bite my tongue a lot, even though I may disagree violently with something that's being espoused in Relief Society.

I feel like I'm at the bottom of my husband's list most of the time, and I do understand that he has a big responsibility and time commitment. Yet, what's it all for, if we end up barely tolerating each other? Where is the joy in this life?

I will close with a positive example. Early in his calling, when I was pregnant and feeling pretty crummy, my husband phoned from his office one Sunday afternoon between appointments. He asked how I was doing, and I told him I was lying on the bed with the door shut and the kids were screaming downstairs. He said that he had two more interviews.

A few minutes later, he appeared at the bedroom door, saying that he'd told the people that he'd see them later in the week. Then he came and lay down on the bed next to me and put his arm around me, and we talked for a while. He shared a few things with me and asked my opinion on some of the positions that they were trying to fill. It felt great to know I came first at that moment, and I truly appreciated it. I wish that would happen more often.

For the time being, I'm just trying to endure. But I, too, would appreciate any solutions readers could offer--that is, readers who've really been there. I can't just lie down in resignation, but I'd like to start enjoying life again--preferably, with the man I married.

CARLAN YOUNGSTETTER OF SAN MARINO, CALIFORNIA, CALLS ON WOMEN AND MEN WHO STRUGGLE WITH THE KINDS OF BURDENS JUST DESCRIBED, TO STAND UP AND ASK FOR A BETTER WAY. SHE IS OPTIMISTIC THAT CONCERNED AND CREATIVE PEOPLE CAN FIND WAYS TO RESPOND MORE POSITIVELY TO WHAT SHE AGREES IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM AREA FOR WIVES OF BISHOPS.

My initial response to the column on bishops' wives was the same one I had after reading about female circumcision for the first time. I wondered how women could let such a horrendous thing go on. At what point do women realize that they are being abused? Women have been slapped, kicked, and sexually taken advantage of by spouses. It seems incredible that until recently society and the victims have not considered this treatment abusive. Such abuse was, furthermore, considered the right of a husband.

I think that these bishops' wives have suffered abuse, whether they recognize it or not, and I feel that these women have a right to be treated with dignity and respect. I have a hard time believing that the Lord sanctions anything that causes such unhappiness, stress, and disassociation between spouses as described by these wives. I suspect that the Lord is going to hold accountable those women, as well as men, who allow such abuse to go on.

I believe that, unfortunately, these wives are representative of all women in the Church. Slavery, women's disenfranchisement, and barring women from higher education was supported by claiming that it was the Lord's mind and will. We claim that a women's obedience to priesthood leaders, her lack of decision-making power in the Church, and her restriction to one role (motherhood) are the Lord's

will, too. One day they may realize what an irrational position this is.

We believe that our democratic nation, which thrives because of diversity and space for men and women to equally exercise their God-given talent, was God-inspired. Does it make sense that this same Father of All would establish a church that seems to advance men at the expense of the well-being of women and that creates such a limited role for women who have the same capability and same diversity of talents and skills as men? Our nation demonstrates that strength and prosperity seem to come with an organization that represents all people. To the degree that both men and women are included in the decision-making process of the Church, I believe we will have a more effective organization and one that is more responsive and fair to all. The Lord endowed women with intelligence, capabilities, and leadership skills. I don't believe that He condones these traits being limited or suppressed by any authority, whether ecclesiastical or governmental.

Women need to stand up and acknowledge their worthiness and claim their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in the Church. Women must accept their responsibility in having allowed the suffering described in these sisters' letters. The Lord is more rational than the Church reflects. Hopefully, brave, enlightened women will take a stand to have the Church reflect better on the Lord. It's time to stop justifying and accommodating the abuse and indignity these wives and all Mormon women suffer and perhaps the place to start is in openly acknowledging that it is, in fact, abuse.

HAVING NOW REFLECTED ON SOME THORNY AREAS, WE TURN TO SOME GREEN PASTURES. ANNE CASTLETON WRITES TO USE FROM PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND, ABOUT HER JOYFUL RELIEF SOCIETY EXPERIENCE. SHE ALSO ADDS HER THOUGHTS ABOUT "AUTHORITY":

Ordinarily, I try to get a calling in the Primary so that my time at church is productive, and I can legitimately avoid Relief Society. But when I come home to the Providence ward (I am out of state during the school year), I always prefer to attend Relief Society. This wasn't true a few years ago. A few determined and loving women and a supportive bishop can make all the difference in the world.

This summer I returned to a Relief Society room newly decorated with elegant drapes designed and created by Relief Society members. Impressionist prints in gilt frames decorated the walls newly wallpapered in a creme-on-creme brocade pattern. A credenza and newly reupholstered chairs finished the picture. When I asked how this came to be, I was told that an anonymous donor gave the money and that a few women who cared about beauty planned the room and executed their plan.

Often on Sunday, the Relief Society and Young Women meet together with refreshments, and someone prepares a reading that is either entertaining or inspiring or both. Last week, a sister with a mental illness was given a blessing during Relief Society by the bishop. Whenever anyone in the Relief Society needs to be set apart, members of the bishopric do it in the Relief Society room during our regular meeting.

What has happened to the Providence Relief Society is more than these events. The women come from diverse backgrounds and hold a variety of beliefs but are developing an openness to difference and the ability to accept and love those who are not like themselves. I have appreciated and benefited from this personally. To many of these sisters, it appears that I left and divorced a devoted husband and Church member. Nonetheless, they have supported and loved me even without understanding the situation.

The best thing that has happened within myself is my changing attitude toward authority. Authority and power are things that I now bestow on others. Realizing this has been empowering for me. In the past, I went from one authority figure

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Reunion Impressions

Jane Hallstrom
Advance, North Carolina



The reunion was transcendent, and that's putting it mildly. Nature herself, the master craftswoman of the weekend, spent three glorious days weaving my tattered soul back into the fabric of the universe. To signify just how cosmically integrating my experience was, the weather itself provides me with a perfect metaphor.

Friday, as I got off the plane in Boston and stepped into the oppressive ninety degree heat and eighty-five percent humidity, my first thought was, "For this I left North Carolina?" Oppression enough I had of my own, weighted down as I was with the marital, spiritual, financial, and sexual problems of the sisters of my branch (I am their Relief Society president), not to mention my own. Looking over the tentative discussion topics listed on my registration form, including "Sexuality," "Aids," and "Alternate Spiritual Paths" (one of the sisters in my ward is converting to Baha'i right under my nose), I wondered how these topics could provide retreat from, let alone direction through, the burdensome air that my life had become.

That night in Hillsboro, as we each stood and gave our reasons for being there--and we heard reasons as diverse as the regions of the country from which we came--I honestly wondered, "Can we help one another? Is this going to do any good at all?" But then the singing started, and Jan and Scott Cooper led us in suffrage songs and favorite hymns. When the sound of "Amazing Grace" rose from the dining hall in one unified affirmation of hope, something lifted inside of me. Maybe my saturation level was rising as I joined in caring for others, and the relative oppression of my own life no longer seemed as great.

Saturday dawned sweaty and demanding, but that was my own choice. I took Maida Withers's dance class. After a plunge in the lake and a great breakfast, Mary Bradford shared a funny essay from her book *Leaving Home*, starting our digestion and the day off right. The agenda was described, and the floor was opened to suggestions for additional discussion topics. I soon learned that we don't "discuss problems," we "deal with issues." This simple change in vocabulary gave some immediate relief to my own low-pressure systems, and the rest of the day I learned and practiced techniques for affecting my internal barometer.

The sun beat down on Mary Beth Raynes's workshop on exploring alternate spiritual paths, but my group peacefully ignored it as we meditated on the scripture, "Be still and know that I am God." Later in Meg Wheatley's session, I worked to create good things for myself by positively affirming qualities that I wished manifest in my life and letting God take care of the details. He did! As I became more comfortable with myself and others, a gentle breeze was sent to cool the shady air under the tree where we sat. It continued to stir as I mingled from group to group and hopped from conversation to conversation during our picnic lunch. The after-lunch discussions on staying married or getting divorced were times to let it all hang out, and the weather participated by sending a good soaking rain.

This set unexpected limitations on Maida's afternoon workshop, "Making a Dance." Instead of using a variety of outdoor environments, which now were too wet, we had to explore ourselves and interrelationships to touch and press, to catch and lift, and to observe and teach one another. Now I was trusting: the weather to provide comfortable climate and my sisters to uphold and enrich the making of my own weekend's dance.

The barometer continued to rise and so did the hilarity at our evening talent sharing time. Nervousness and inhibitions evaporated as we enjoyed the singing and dancing (and a special guest appearance by a bat who was roused from his rafters by the high F in my musical number). Lorraine Bradford and Glenda Stahn electrified the atmosphere with their presentation of poetry and movement that to me symbolized the inescapable separateness that our life's journey is. But Mary Beth's keynote speech that followed assured us that inner peace and "connectedness" could also be had on the journey. At one point in her talk, we were asked to close our eyes and look for a female guide within ourselves who could be a strength and a comfort on our way. She appeared in my mind as a Madonna figure emerging from the lines of a bark of a large tree trunk. Her message to me was, "Let's be happy." And I was.

We closed the festivities again with the swelling strains of "Amazing Grace." Maida had recently performed, at funerals for some of her friends, a dance to this song, which she explained is becoming the theme song for dying AIDS victims. Spontaneously, she danced for us her dance of death, laying to rest for a while some of the worries of this age and leaving those of us who remained in the hall past the closing prayer to reminisce about some of the glories of past ones. With Lou Chandler improvising on guitar, a small group of die-hards sat there till two in the morning singing everything from peace songs and civil rights tunes to mountain ballads and love songs. I haven't sung like that in years--with such heartfelt abandon--earnest as we were to make beauty in our voices and our lives. The next day there were reports that our music had drifted through the clear air across the lake. I hope that it carried with it our happiness. For me, that was the high point of the retreat.

Sunday the air could not stay still. It tousled the treetops and rippled the water, creating currents just like those currents of relationships that sisters who two days before might not have known each other were being shared now on many levels. Talents, thoughts, and experiences--common and contrasting--crisscrossed the lake like canoes or churned like paddleboats, clanged like dinnerbells or cried like loons in the rushes, or silently shone like rain reaching out on heavy hemlock boughs. We had created a dynamic life of our own, these women of the covenant, sitting in the circle of our final, Quaker-style meeting, and the restless wind echoed our vibrancy. Ruth Ray watched its work through the wooden rooms of the recreation room and wrote this poem that she shared with us for a closing thought:

The winds wrap
Around us,
Throwing their breath
Into our breath,

And we drive the wind
Into our deepest parts,
Then share with nature
All its richness--our richness.

We dance each thought
Riding on that wind,
Circling, falling, rising,
And leaping with each breath.

The singing with that air
Rings through minds' windows,
Whistles through ears' rafters,
Then rests, pulsing on our hearts,

'Til age becomes
That true rushing of winds,
Lifting, tossing out to touch--
Then press.

The wind danced back along the path with us to the dining hall where we feasted and drank deeply one last time of the good food and dear friends. Then the benediction was delivered. A torrent of rain blew up and pelted the roof in a steady clatter. Sisters ran out to put our camping gear on the lodge porch, and it was time to go. Down to my roots, I felt refreshed. I could leave with reawakened suppleness in my limbs--limbs used for reaching outward and upward and for supporting others--better able to process the light that comes my way for feeding myself and giving off energy to those within my influence. The grass and trees were greener and stronger now, and so was I.

What does all this metaphoric meandering mean? I don't know. The retreat was for me affirming in some basic way. Because of it, I feel freer and more

encouraged in my art, in my thinking, and in my living. I love the friends I made and the things we said and did. We did help one another. Just being with women who share a hope in Christ and all that His salvation may mean, in an atmosphere where no subject is taboo, was wonderful. I said that the experience was transcendent. One definition of that word is "beyond knowledge." Maybe that's why I've had such a hard time putting it into words. Actually five little ones sum it all up for me: I had a great time!!



Reunion Impressions

Sue Hawes
New Orleans, Louisiana



As usual, my central impression of the reunion was sharing. Some folks came already friends, hence the name reunion; others came knowing no one, yet were immediately drawn into the circle of sharing. We were a diverse group of homemakers, students, executives, insurance brokers, and dance instructors. But what impressed everyone was the ease with which a conversation could be started with anyone.

There were four sets of mothers and daughters at the reunion. What better way to share some of your favorite, or soon to be favorite, people with someone you love. Most importantly, the younger generation was in New Hampshire. Many students and young working women came, and they are the ones who will carry on the *Exponent II* tradition.

Several traditions were continued. Friday night each person shared why they had come and what they hoped to gain from the reunion. By letting everyone know something about everyone else, we easily found our soul sisters with common interests afterwards. Music was an integral part of the weekend. As usual, a mixture of hymns, folk songs, and old LDS women's suffrage songs were the favorites. Jan and Scott Cooper sang Appalachian spirituals for us. Singing "Amazing Grace" at midnight, while Maida Withers danced out the pain, suffering, and joy of an AIDS funeral, was a powerful experience.

On Saturday night, Mary Beth Raynes discussed the spiritual and developmental problems that attend each generation of an LDS woman's life. Every age group has typical crises that generally revolve around identity. As we mature, we learn that the crises will continue, that they make us grow, and that we can cope with them. Her discussion of the problems of our 40's and 50's touched me deeply because it was so applicable to my life. She stated that most of us reach a point when we no longer see the Church as the perfect thing we once thought it to be. I have never seen it as perfect but have always found it to be the best thing going, so have stayed. But in my middle years, I am seeing both more problems and more strengths.

Her thoughts about developing both a personal theology and a sense of your

relationship to the Church hit home because that is what I have been trying to do for several years. Working for the Federal government, I know that when it comes to getting things done, it is far easier to receive forgiveness than permission. Unfortunately, I am also realizing that the same applies to the bureaucracy of the Church.

At the end of her talk, she had everyone perform a powerfully impressive exercise. We were each asked to visualize a spiritually-mature woman in as much detail as we could see. The results were interesting. Some of us saw women from our own wards, others pictured Heavenly Mother, and others saw nothing, had no model of such a woman. This visualization and ensuing discussion helped solidify spiritual goals for many of us.

Of the approximately twelve sessions held, the one session that influenced me the most was on marriage. This session was not originally scheduled: Because there were ones on divorce and singleness, someone suggested a session on staying married. Love, commitment, communication, and accepting differences, we decided, are the major factors that hold marriages together. It was enlightening for each sister to realize that no one else's marriage was perfect; that every sister there was struggling to maintain a quality relationship with her spouse. No one loved her husband all the time. It was a combination of major loving sacrifices and small daily deeds that reminded each why they had married. At times each partner will take gallons and give drops; at other times the proportions are reversed. I came home resolved to strengthen my marriage and be more understanding of our vast differences.

As usual, one of the highlights of the reunion was the Quaker-type meeting held on Sunday afternoon. There each sister and brother shared whatever was in her or his heart at the moment. Nearly everyone chose to participate in this conclusion to the weekend. Many expressed gladness that there were so many young sisters there, ready to carry *Exponent II* forward for many more years. Some had drawn away from the Church, and the weekend had carried them back closer to their roots. Many had come full of angry thoughts at others and were leaving full of peace.

But Mary Beth Raynes voiced the dominant theme that "even though we were going to our separate homes, we would still continue to influence each other and the Church. There would now be threads of love and concern across the country." Others expanded this theme to talk of the great power of the women of the Church and the power of togetherness. This is our Church, too, and we share the responsibility for making it the refuge that we want. The Church is imperfect people trying to be perfect, and we can't just leave it there. We have a responsibility for the perfection of the Church as well as the Saints. One way to do this is to extend these threads in our own wards and to teach our sons as well as our daughters of our concerns and cares. There is conflict and pain in the Church, even though many don't want to admit it, but these negatives are there because so much joy exists also.

Everyone left feeling that they had received far more than they had given. The organizers of the reunion deserve thanks, for they gave more than most. But stepping back and looking, the weekend would have been less had any one person been missing. Many spontaneous conversations about a variety of topics started people thinking about new things and in new ways. There were enough gifts of self and ideas that we each have many months of pondering as well as many new friends. The threads have been woven tighter and spread further and will be ready to be expanded next year.

[Editor's Note: The 1988 *Exponent II* reunion is scheduled for the weekend of July 15-17. Now is the time to start planning, and we suggest that you make your reservations early. Contact us at our post office box, or phone the new "Hotline" number. We look forward to seeing you.





CHRIST'S DISCIPLESHIP OF EQUALS

Christine Rigby Arrington
Menlo Park, California

In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins, by Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, published by Crossroad, New York, 1984, 357 pages, \$19.50.

This book reclaims the Bible for people, like me, who believe in the equality of men and women. Some feminists have given up on the Bible as finally too tainted by the patriarchal culture it was set in, but Fiorenza argues that the Bible is too important a pillar of our world to be surrendered by feminists. She sets about to reclaim the Bible through a painstaking and rigorous process of historical reconstruction and text analysis. Her sources are the New Testament text in Greek and original documents from the early Christian era.

The result is a newly credible theology of equality, rediscovered powerful roles for early Christian women, and the most complete explanation to date of how the early church evolved into patriarchy after Christ's death. The book is a brilliant coming of age for women's theology. It is a watershed work in feminist Christian scholarship, written in an objective, lucid style with a healing undertone that seeks to unite Christian and Jewish feminists and even refuses to condemn Paul, the first instrument of Christian women's subjugation.

Fiorenza is a world-class Bible scholar, a German, a Roman Catholic, and she has been a professor of New Testament Studies and Theology at the University of Notre Dame for more than ten years. She was the first co-chair, with Carol Christ, of the American Academy of Religion's Women's Caucus. Her scholarly background includes nine years of classical Latin and six years of Greek every day, a graduate degree in theology from the University of Wurzburg, a doctorate of theology from the University of Munster, and an active life in theological organizations in this country. Her husband is also a theologian and is president of the Catholic Theological Society of America. The book is dedicated to their daughter, Christina, now 13.

In this book, Fiorenza examines the first three hundred years of Christianity from the viewpoint of the women involved in it. She makes three main points: First, Christ's gospel was an equalitarian one. By returning to the original Greek of the New Testament, she shows, line by line, that Christ taught a discipleship of equals: His teachings did not support patriarchal marriage nor build on the family structure. Rather, He emphasized the family of believers and the importance of extending familial love to all those deprived of it.

Second, she shows that women played more important roles in the early church than has ever been shown before, as witnesses to Christ, true disciples, leaders, rich patronesses, ministers, and prophetesses. Her discussions of the "house church" showed rich women as the sponsors of many fledgling Christian communities—a patronage that was crucial in the survival of the beleaguered Christian movement. The prominence of women in this missionary era explains why Christianity is repeatedly referred to in original documents from that period as a religion of women and slaves. She also shows much evidence of women performing what we Mormons consider priesthood ordinances. This section of the book is perhaps Fiorenza's most original and pioneering work.

Third, she demonstrates that under Paul's leadership the church was forced for its survival to adopt the patriarchal structures of Greco-Roman society, particularly by subordinating women within marriage and the church. Paul was driven to this to separate Christianity from the pagan cults of the time that also attracted primarily women and, thereby, to distance Christianity from damaging claims that it also utilized orgiastic ceremonies.

Fiorenza's methodology is not one for the faint-hearted. In fact, she used the word *hermeneutics* so many times that I finally had to give up my idea that it was derived from Herman Munster. She is so demanding in the structure of her arguments that she uses the first three chapters of the book, a full ninety-five pages, to discuss and outline her method-

ology and assumptions. She writes as an engaged feminist and clearly spells out what that means.

She not only combs the original texts for all references to women, but she also makes important analytical connections that provide clues for her sleuthing. For example, because the male pronoun *he* was used then as now to include both men and women, she postulates the presence of women in many gatherings where only men have been thought to be—such as the Last Supper.

She points up many instances of androcentric language in translation that dramatically effect our understanding of women's roles. For example, in Romans 16:1-3, Phoebe, an important early missionary leader, is called the *diakonos* and *prostatas* of the church at Cenchreae. "Exegetes attempt to downplay the importance of both titles here because they are used with reference to a woman," Fiorenza writes. "Whenever Paul calls himself, Apollos, Timothy, or Tychicos *diakonos*, scholars translate the term as *deacon*, but because the expression here refers to a woman, exegetes translate it as *servant*, *helper*, or *deaconsess* However, the text does not permit such a feminine stereotyping of Phoebe." (p.47)

She also looks at conflicts and proscriptions in the early church as fertile ground for unearthing the truth about women's participation. For example, she examines the gnostic texts detailing the clash between Mary Magdalene and Peter and correlates that with what was reported in the scriptures. She outlines the conflict between the "so-called Hebrews and Hellenists" in the early Jerusalem Christian church and shows that it may have "involved the role and participation of women at the eucharistic meal." (p. 166) She discusses the fact that if Paul were declaring that women couldn't teach or lead the church, then there must have been women doing or trying to do both or he wouldn't have needed to prohibit those behaviors. She unearths many clues to support that.

While other Christian feminist works have approached many of these topics, none have mastered all so resoundingly. Fiorenza's book is so methodical, so broad in its reach, and so detailed in its analysis that it sets a new standard for women's theology.

At the same time that it deals with issues of concern to women, this book also serves as an excellent primer on the most reliable fruits of current biblical scholarship. Some of these findings can be a bit disquieting upon first encounter. For example, she shows the clear divergence between the "Jesus movement," which is most accurately described as a renewal movement within Judaism, and the early Christian missionary movement, in which some central concepts had evolved into something quite different from those taught by Jesus. She also accepts that the New Testament's authors were not unbiased historians but advocates for a cause, and therefore the arguments they chose to include can reveal the barriers those arguments sought to overcome—such as questions surrounding women's roles.

The book's title refers to the unnamed woman who reportedly anointed Jesus' feet. Mark quotes Jesus saying, "And truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her." (Mark 14:9) Fiorenza writes:

Despite their differences, all four Gospels reflect the same basic story: a woman anoints Jesus. This incident causes objections which Jesus rejects by approving of the woman's action. If the original story had been just a story about the anointing of a guest's feet, it is unlikely that such a commonplace gesture would have been remembered and retold as the proclamation of the gospel. Therefore, it is much more likely that in the original story the woman anointed Jesus' head. Since the prophet in the Old Testament anointed the head of the Jewish king, the anointing of Jesus' head must have been understood immediately as the prophetic recognition of Jesus, the Anointed, the Messiah, the Christ. According to the tradition it was a woman who named Jesus by and through her prophetic sign-action. (p. xiv)

Fiorenza continues, "Both Christian feminist theology and biblical interpretation are in the process of rediscovering that the Christian gospel cannot be proclaimed if the women disciples and what they have done are not remembered." It is in the service of that memory and that gospel that this book was written, embodying a powerful resurrection of our Christian heritage.

(usually a white, male, Church leader) to another trying to get someone to give me permission to use birth control or trying to find someone who agreed with my position on some other issue. The problem with this is that if I give these people the authority to translate God's will to me and I obey it and it doesn't end happily--shouldn't I blame God?

After a while, I realized that if I am preparing for a role in the next life that involved being in charge and making decisions--which I choose to believe that I am--then obedience isn't going to be as good a preparation as using my own judgment, making some mistakes as well as some wonderful decisions, learning from both my mistakes and successes, and taking responsibility for my own actions. I had to give up the notion that making a mistake was such a big deal. I now believe that it is what you do about your mistakes that is important.

Church leaders are now much less authority figures to me, though I try to recognize the areas in which they have much more expertise than I do. My new feelings came out in my recent temple recommend interview. Many of the issues of authority are implicit in the fact that I must go to a male Church-designated authority to get access to the temple. Although this is not something I can affect, an attitude determining my own worthiness rather than having it determined for me is useful. One of the questions was, "Have you ever had a divorce that wasn't resolved by the proper authority?" I told my bishop that the proper authorities seemed to be God and myself and that we had reached a resolution. I passed myself, and he passed me.

WHAT FOLLOWS IS A LETTER WRITTEN BY HARRIET RAPSON, PRESIDENT OF THE ARLINGTON (MASSACHUSETTS) WARD RELIEF SOCIETY, TO HER SISTERS AS A SEND-OFF TO SUMMER. WE THINK THAT IT EXPRESSES BEAUTIFULLY THE BEST KIND OF RELIEF SOCIETY SPIRIT:

First, I'd like to express appreciation and thanks to each of you for the contributions you have made to our Relief Society.

Rather than allowing differing points of view and a wide variety of personalities and experience to create divisiveness, a sensitivity and openness toward these differences has created a stimulating atmosphere offering opportunities for each of us to grow.

Our Relief Society board has worked hard during the past year, trying to address the needs of the sisters, both as a unit, and also on individual levels. There have been gaps in this service, so we welcome ideas on ways that we can all better extend ourselves.

A special thanks to all those who serve faithfully as visiting teachers. I believe strongly in the effectiveness of this caring network as the best means of knowing individual needs and extending friendships. This is a calling not to be taken lightly, as we have a real stewardship toward the sisters whom we serve in this capacity. Thanks, also, to those sisters who have recently offered to join us in this visiting teaching effort and for those who have offered to help in an outreach program toward inactive sisters. We could use additional help in this effort, particularly during the summer months.

We have not scheduled social activities during the summer but hope this will be a time for enhanced individual friendship.

Have a happy summer! Let's use it to grow together.

WE OFFER THE FOLLOWING SUBMISSION FROM A SISTER IN CALIFORNIA AS A "SISTERS HELP" QUESTION AND AS AN INTRODUCTION TO AN ISSUE THAT SHOULD BE OF GREAT CONCERN TO ALL OF US. PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR RESPONSES BY February 1 1988 USING DOUBLE SPACING AND MARGINS OF 10 AND 50:

A missionary farewell party recently brought me together with an old and dear friend with whom I had not enjoyed a good long talk in years. He has had many

different stake and ward leadership callings and is someone whom I trust and admire. He is a kind and wise man, generally, and I was anxious for the two of us to share some thoughts about some people we had seen earlier that evening and some whose names came up in conversation. Particularly, I wanted to talk about several close friends who had divorced. I needed to try to understand "what had happened" and to get some clues as to appropriate responses that I might make towards these folks who were so dear to both of us. Because we both knew both partners in at least four divorces that we were discussing, we could struggle together, I hoped, to figure out ways to support whomever needed us most.

In the hours that followed, I felt good about much that we shared, and I appreciated the breadth of counseling experience that he had had in his leadership years. He shared with me one very powerful insight that reinforced what I had suspected. He said that one of the things that he felt most strongly about, having counseled many couples with "rocky" marriages, was that professional therapy was essential to get back on track. Further, he said, if one partner in a couple refuses the counseling or doesn't understand the counseling process and refuses to learn, his experience had led him to conclude that that partner was not committed enough to the marriage to give what it took to turn their problems around and resolve the tough issues. When both are equally committed to, and actually accept in good faith, professional counseling, the chances are great that they will work through even very difficult differences to the married satisfaction of both. But, when one refuses, said my experienced friend, "I have learned to expect the worst. Divorce is often the only resort."

As an example of a failure to resolve differences, we turned to the case of our friends, "Jack" and "Jill." My friend did not divulge any confidences because we both knew all too well most of the circumstances that had led to their recent divorce. Jack, who had been a much-respected leader on ward and stake levels, was an emotionally abusive husband who had managed to hold his manipulated wife in a destructive marriage for over two decades while they raised several children. During that time, he had carried on a number of extra-marital affairs. When my friend counseled Jack and Jill, he insisted that they seek professional advice. "Abusive behavior does not go away without serious help," he told them. Jill followed his advice and had pleaded with Jack to accompany her. Jack repeatedly refused, and the abuse continued. Jack also had another affair. He was excommunicated, and Jill sought and got a divorce.

Years of marital abuse had really taken its toll on her, as we were to see. She continued in therapy, though, and we both agreed that with the assistance of someone who seemed to be a good professional, especially skilled in dealing with and supporting formerly abused women, Jill would make it. She seemed to be working hard on her life and making progress.

My friend and I were quite of one mind thus far into our very intense and sad conversation, but suddenly we hit a barrier and fell into very opposite places, where we apparently remain. What happened was that, having agreed as to what basically seems to have happened in the divorce of Jack and Jill, we got to asking what we could best do for each. Charitably, I thought, my friend said that his goal was to love and sustain Jack back into the Church. While acknowledging that Jack was still unwilling to seek therapy, my friend said that he seemed genuinely sorry and was now approaching a second marriage and deserved the support and love of his old LDS friends.

But what about Jill? We agreed that she had been terribly wronged. We agreed that she was doing well for herself but that she had a badly damaged ego and lacked healthy self-esteem, which is common under circumstances like those that we had described. "But," my friend said wearily, "I don't want to take Jill on these days. She might be just too much, so I stay away from her. We haven't talked in many, many months."

Astounded, I asked what it was about our old and dear friend that he didn't think that he would be able to tolerate. It was simply put: "I can't stand the fact that she is still angry." I grew resentful. First, if he hadn't talked to her in months, who had reported that she was angry? Jack? Second, I had heard this feeling expressed before in LDS circles. Was Jill's finally standing up for herself being interpreted as anger? I began to press him. Was it not the advice of her own good therapists, including her LDS social services counselor, that had led her to the point where she could at last express the frustration and sadness and anger that she had bottled up these many years?

Yes, this was true, he agreed. But, while Jack appeared so calm and remorseful, begging for another chance, Jill was expressive and honest, unlike her former gentle, sweet, and passive self. She appeared to my friend, in a word, unpleasant. My friend reported that others had noticed this behavior in Jill since her divorce. She told her story often; it was too much for her friends.

I protested. Hadn't professionals with experience in the area of spouse abuse written book after book saying this was a positive, and necessary, stage? Wasn't Jill doing exactly what we all had hoped she would and could do? And didn't she, too, deserve and need support in this difficult time of rebuilding her life and self-esteem? My friend agreed that she did but said that he was not the one who could offer it. Like many others, he said, her rebuilding was simply too tough a burden to carry for even the best of old friends. However, I knew of others who had helped carry the burden, even if he could not.

After he protested my suggestion that he take the load from Jill one more time, I conceded that we all had different roles to play in life and that not one of us could do it all. It was a comfortable division of labors of love, I allowed. He would take Jack's burden, and I and others would assist Jill. Both would get their due. I was content with that until I took note of the LDS group responses to these two.

Throughout the wards and stake, the saints lined up in a spirit of Christian love to reconvert Jack, while the uncommunicated Jill was plodding her road quite alone. There are a few, she reports, who have offered their all, quite willing to share her rage and her joys. But she admits that she is disappointed with the lack of understanding from those who should--by way of their priesthood callings--be more willing to learn how they could be of support and help. She feels that she is an enigma to all those who should have had the most insight. Of all their mutual friends in the Church, most seem to prefer to forget that fact the Jack had done nothing to resolve any of his past issues and to take the easier, more comfortable road of supporting him without question. Wouldn't this type of support prevent Jack from learning what was necessary for his own eternal salvation?

While I am not against any gesture of loving kindness that people offer this stumbling brother, the pattern of the group response continues to unsettle me. After I talked with my friend, I began to read . . . and read . . . and ask people knowledgeable in the area of spouse abuse whether this pattern is a familiar one.

And I am unnerved to say that the universal response was, "Of course!" In book after book, interview after interview, and article after article, the summary analysis is the same. Women victimized for years by abusive husbands can expect to be victims of a response called, quite commonly, "blame the victim." It consists very predictably of some basic reactions.

One is the denial of the abuse and the expression of anger at the woman for insisting that abuse be called by its name. Close friends often label abused women "excessive" in their claims--even when they know otherwise--apparently out of discomfort with confronting the reality of abuse within their circle of friends. Some deny because they somehow feel that they could have helped earlier, and did

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 20)

Letters to the Editor

Dear Exponent Sisters,

Last year I gave a subscription to my mom, and she loved it! Now she tells all her friends about it and has even given gift subscriptions to others!

Keep up the good work. We need what you are doing. There are such bonds of love that connect Mormon women. I can feel them in nearly every Relief Society I've attended, and *Exponent* is a written extension of those bonds. People (especially in the Church--because, in part, it is such a social entity) don't share their feelings and commune enough with each other. How can we grow closer and more unified if we can't share what we are--deep down inside? Please continue struggling along.

Cynthia Kofford
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

★

To Exponent II staff,

Congratulations on a wonderful Spring issue. And it was so timely, arriving as it did just after the Relief Society lesson, "A message to our granddaughters!" The article by Kay Webber, "One Woman's Response," was especially appreciated. I have loaned my copy to our Relief Society president.

You are lifesavers.

Irene M. Bates
Pacific Palisades, California

★

Dear Editors,

Recently while visiting in Washington, my sister gave me a copy of your delightful magazine that had been sent to her daughter-in-law, Linda Lambert. The magazine was a year or two old but had a piece in it that was very interesting to me. My sister had saved it for me because it contained an article signed "Anonymous" that I had written for my sisters as a Mother's Day tribute back in 1960 when we all had teenagers at home.

I have heard that the poem had been read in Provo in a Relief Society meeting several years ago and several other places, but it is the first time I had seen it in print so that I could claim credit for it.

I have only one idea how it could have become public without my signature and that is that the woman who typed it for me gave copies to others without putting my name on it. I had not had her sign my name in type for the master she gave me because it was sent to my five sisters with a hand-written note.

The piece starts out thus:

Blessed art thou Woman
For thou shalt be called Mother.
Yea, and thy chores and thy tasks
Shall follow thee all the days
Of thy life. [Vol XII, No. 3]

I realize that I should have copy-righted the things I have written if I didn't want to be called Anonymous but am happy this once to be able to correct this error.

I enjoyed your magazine (the one copy I had the privilege to read). Success to you in your efforts.

Edna E. Maurer
Murray, Utah

[Editor's Note: Thank you so much for writing, Edna. What a joy to have an anonymous sister given her due and well-deserved credit.]

Sisters:

After some very disillusioning experiences and feelings similar to those described in "The Interview" by Laura Hamblin (Volume XI, No. 1), I sincerely tried to leave the Church. I used my bitterness to propel me into actively seeking new explanations to spiritual experiences; new, more acceptable validations for my womanhood that what I knew; a world and a belief that would allow questioning and philosophy and growth without limiting me or judging me as "unworthy" for daring to think for myself.

I found that I couldn't "leave the Church." It is part of me. No matter where I turned my perspective was decidedly LDS. I wanted and needed the gospel in my life, but I wanted and needed it with new terms. I couldn't go back to subservience; to a denial of my talents and abilities and intelligence; to being less than I am capable of; to the unnatural--for me--expectations of being the perfect Mormon homemaker and mother and "Yes, Bishop!" Church member--all those things that I grew up believing were criteria for a "good Mormon woman."

In this quest for myself, I was beginning to feel that I would have to give up that very big, real part of me that relies on faith because my faith led me toward a role model that I am unable and unwilling to strive for--a feminine shadow behind a "worthy Priesthood holder"; the admonition to become like my Brother, Jesus, and my Father in Heaven. Once I began to realize that being my best does not mean being the woman behind the successful man or trying to fit into an unreal mold of motherly perfection . . . that being my best allows me to achieve within my own realm of potential as a whole, separate individual . . . the Gospel as I knew it just didn't "fit" anymore.

Men, in general, typically do not understand, sympathize with, or truly accept women. Female achievements, successes, and even intelligence threaten the male ego and are therefore discounted by men. And yet, man is made in the "image of God." I found myself asking, "How can I put all my faith and trust in a Being that seems to function without an active, equal feminine counterpart? How do I pray for guidance to a God that seems to put women in second place--below, beneath, behind, and unequal to men--a God that may be omniscient while still having no real concept of all the many feelings and experiences that are uniquely female?"

Oh, I knew the doctrine--minute as it is--about our Mother in Heaven. But I'd never heard enough about Her to put any active faith in her existence. In fact, to even try to discuss her seemed almost heretical!

And then a dear friend loaned me a copy of *Exponent II*. Can you imagine my excitement and relief to find there are sisters who dare to challenge the "mold?" Women, active Mormon women--some of whom don't sew and bake bread--who even have careers outside the home without feeling guilty. Women who find pride and comfort in just being themselves! Women who believe in and openly attest to their eternal nature with such open, expressive honesty--such freedom of thought!

I hadn't dared hope . . . maybe I can have the gospel and myself too!

Thank you for a new perspective--where traditionally "unpopular" ideas about womanhood and our eternal nature have found a voice to unite thinking women of the Church. Thank you for breathing life back into a nearly expired faith.

Kathleen Jacobs
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Editor:

I had the opportunity to attend the 1987 Exponent II Reunion in Hillsboro, New Hampshire. The experience did not motivate me to sign up for an *Exponent II* subscription; however, I did not feel alienated by the attendees or many of the views explored.

As an impressionable 24-year-old, I can best describe the weekend as my "rite of passage" into Mormon feminism. The discussions I listened in on taught me that much of life's experiences are full of grays rather than blacks and whites. Some of the women I met there would be role models if I knew them in everyday life.

My favorite workshops were Mary Bradford's on expressing oneself through writing and the slide presentation/discussion on the effects of the military build-up on Soviet children. I would like to have attended a workshop on political activism and community involvement.

Judy Yoshiko Shim
West Hollywood, California



Dear Editor:

For me the "Sisters Speak" topic on a feminist theology was encouraging. In the scriptures, we read about the "sons of God," but not much about the daughters. My gospel doctrine teacher closes his lesson each week saying, "Now, brethren, implement these principles into your lives." Does that mean we "sisteren" don't have to? A friend told me that her grandmother, a ward gospel doctrine teacher, was once called into the bishop's office and reprimanded for teaching that the Holy Ghost was a woman. Now, I say "AWOMEN" to that piece of feminist theology! It does beat the image of a great rolling termite queen of a Mother in Heaven who is closeted away in some celestial chamber birthing a billion spirit children per second. (Imagine, not earth seconds but heaven ones.) I'm all for further truth and light on the subject.

Betina Lindsey
Centerville, Utah

★

To the Editors,

A friend just got her first issue of *Exponent II* and passed it on to me. I really enjoyed the articles, and found them expressing some of the feelings that I have.

I particularly enjoyed "Revising Mormonism" by Ulrich. Laurel is the Sunbeam teacher in our ward [Portsmouth, New Hampshire], and I know the time she puts into the lessons and the love she has for the children. She has a large class that she has alone and to see the children all want to be near her or on her lap shows how much they love her. We should surely be thankful that sisters like Laurel accept callings in our Primaries--such a great example for our little ones to follow.

Enclosed is a check to begin my subscription. I need my own copy. Thanks.

Mildred E. Sachs
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Readers' Responses

Editor,

Every Church member (especially male) should read Kay Webber's letter in the last issue (Volume XIII, No. 3) and taste its ironies.

Today I had a chance to teach a lesson in elder's quorum, so I chose #26. Its title has a hidden premise that you are supposed to mentally accept without noticing it, while your brain is seeking to make sense of the incomplete title by adding something to it. It is like an advertisement proclaiming "Merits Are Better" (which says nothing because the object of comparison is not stated). Its built-in premise that you are supposed not to notice as you automatically go through the good-better-best sequence, is that Merits are "good" when, in fact, they may be very bad.

The hidden premise in the lesson title, "The Role of Women," is, of course, that there is such a thing as a single "role" for "women." The lesson--by the usual name-dropping anonymous author(s)--assures the readers that we Priesthood holders treat women as "equals," then proceeds to



quote the statements of seven men relative to the subject. That there might be a pertinent female opinion is not even considered! (Reference was made to New Testament occasions of contact between Jesus and women, two of which were worthwhile in showing Jesus's lack of some then-current religious and political prejudice against women.)

The built-in bias of a male-creator God with women as chattel has four-thousand-year-old roots and is so deeply engrained that even good men are oblivious to their prejudice and discrimination toward women. There is a long way to go yet before true "equality" is achieved.

Lew W. Wallace
San Gabriel, California

★

Dear Sisters,

I have only one grievance toward *Exponent II*, but it is a grave one: My day vanishes before my eyes upon the sight of it in my mailbox. No matter what was planned, it is a lost cause. I don't even answer the telephone while I am reading the first four pages and Letters to the Editor. I am certain that the current issue is the best one yet.

What a crying shame it is that every lady in our Church cannot have this wealth come into her home. I have lived to see so many publications come and go, and now we are down to the *Ensign*--which is fine in its own right. But what came of the days when we got the *Ladies Home Journal*, the different versions of *The Relief Society Magazine*, *The Instructor*, and so forth. Please keep *Exponent* coming until I expire.

I do get *Sunstone* and *Dialogue*, which I truly appreciate and enjoy, but *Exponent* has its own special place in my seventy-two-and-a-half-year-old heart.

Leatha H. Christensen
Mesa, Arizona

The article, "Living with Aids" [Volume 13, No. 3], was an extremely good one on AIDS, but not so good on homosexuality. Homosexual feelings are to me incomprehensible, but I know they exist, are intense, and are very real. Forty years in medicine have given me opportunity to study both hetero- and homosexual behavior and feelings.

The concept that the direction that this extremely basic life drive takes is an intellectual choice is completely false. I feel that the direction this drive takes is mostly determined by instinct and is facilitated (or distorted) by training and environment. It is not a conscious choice like choosing a career or make of automobile. The intellect can govern conduct--what you "do" about your feelings (instinctive drive)--but those drives existed millions of years before the intellect was even invented. When "push comes to shove," the feelings will win (dominate), the body will be sacrificed, and the intellect circumvented or rationalized.

I feel that perhaps defects in the author's own sex drive (or sex instruction) rendered her vulnerable to a marriage with a homosexual--who was "sweet, gentle, spiritual, and intelligent." Perhaps a completely normal sexual girl should "smell a rat" when she finds an LDS boy so perfect because the strength of the sex drive (which has a built-in violence-aggression component) should show and be sensed by the normal girl, even if it is well controlled by the boy.

The author admits to blocking on the problem. Only after eight years of marriage did she finally ask the pointed (and correct) question. I think she is still blocking--denying the intensity, the non-intellectuality, the almost overwhelming dominance of the power of this drive. Sex is a vital component of the species preservation drive common to all life on earth.

The author carries that denial into her conviction that homosexuality is only a "compulsive behavior" or an "addiction." She then labels it a "sin" and goes on to prove that "sin" is curable.

No therapist is going to actually change a strong feeling; he or she can only help modify what is done about it, usually by helping the patient get a better understanding as to the reality (cause and effect) of the feeling. The two letters by the lesbian women who chose to remain celibate in marriage show a better understanding of the basics of this problem than is held by our therapist writer. Perhaps it is necessary for her to hold such concepts to survive emotionally in the extremely tragic circumstances in which she finds herself. I can only cry a little for her and wish I could ease her pain (and hope that my comments do not make her situation worse).

Lew W. Wallace, M.D.
Alhambra, California

★

Judy Dushku's story, "The Day of the Lambs and the Lions," [Volume VIII, No. 3] of the inconsiderate husband in the foyer made me very angry--but then so did the fact that the woman took it. We have as much responsibility for our realities as our husbands. If we let them walk all over us, then we must suffer the consequences. When will we start taking responsibility for our lives? When will we realize that we have the choice "to take or to refuse," as Janice Kapp Perry's lovely song says? That may be the thing we need most as women to learn: that we are not caught, that we are loved and granted our free agency as every man is and must recognize our complicity in the circumstances of our lives. I encourage

that poor woman in the foyer to quit thinking of herself as "lucky" and to make the changes necessary to feel truly a partner in her marriage.

I want to confess that I really hate being a wife and mother sometimes. Does anybody else feel that way? (I know you do: I just had to say it.) It seems to me like those women out there who aren't mothers but who want to be could help us poor harried moms whose lives don't have ten uninterrupted minutes, one single private half hour, in them. Why don't we help each other more? Why don't we give each other a break? This is my scream in the dark. I'm tired and ornery, and I wish that I could afford a maid and some child care this summer. Thanks for being a place I can say so.

Julie J. Nichols
Provo, Utah

★

Dear Editors,

We've just had the a sisters conference in Amsterdam (Holland) and subjects like "the menopause," "depressions," and even "incest" have been talked about. I'm glad to be able now to read more about other activities by women in the Church in other places. I'm a stake Relief Society counselor, and new ideas are very important for me.

It was wonderful to read about the BYU Women's Conference while I was very busy organizing our own women's conference! If you're ever interested in a story about Dutch women's activities in the Church or stories or whatever, I'll be glad to contribute.

[Editor's Note: Please do!]

Maria van Eeden-Korte
Leiden, The Netherlands

★

My applause to Emma Lou Thayne whose insightful message [Volume VIII, No. 1] needs to be resounded in the hearts of all women, especially LDS.

My course is one I meet daily with an attitude of "have to." I am a married woman with five young children and next week I begin a ten-year pathway leading to a doctorate in clinical psychology. Time limitations are obvious, and I'd say that "Herculean" is descriptive of the effort. Yet, I must.

Is it possible to ignore the gifts and ambitions we feel? No! Though timing is essential, expression is imperative. Though seemingly very real, societal and cultural restrictions of women are often misunderstood and sometimes ignorantly self-imposed.

Can it be possible that to achieve expertise, utilize talent, and fulfill potential might be of greater and more effective service in the home and the Church than a life bereft of this progression?

Who can determine who we are and who we are to become? Only we are qualified to do that with one hand in the hand of a loving Father in Heaven.

The goal is nothing so trivial and temporary as applause. That which stirs the mind and motivates the heart is the deepest clarification of purpose and the most intense spiritual confirmation to fulfill it. It is, as Sister Thayne so appropriately expressed, a "private reaching," and it is where we must turn for peace.

Connie Hoglund
Newhall, California

Exponent II publishes articles dealing with issues of concern to women and of interest to women and men. Our aim is to provide an open forum for the honest exchange of ideas. We accept articles on virtually any subject—personal essays, book reviews, fiction, humor, and poetry. Because *Exponent II's* contributors and readers are predominantly Mormon, Mormon-related themes are common.

We welcome work from the inexperienced as well as the more practiced writer. Our editors are prepared to work closely with authors to improve their material. All articles are subject to editing with the author's approval.

To help writers new to *Exponent II*, we offer the following guidelines:

1. Revise your work carefully before submitting it.
2. Type your manuscript (including responses to both "Sisters Speak" and "Sisters Help") double spaced, with margins of 10 and 50, and use only one side of the sheet.
3. Place your name, address, and the title of your article in the upper right-hand corner of each page.
4. Although we occasionally publish longer articles, try to limit your article to between five and six typewritten pages.
5. Send an original plus three copies.
6. Keep a copy of your work; manuscripts will not be returned.

If you have considered writing for *Exponent II*, now's the time! Among upcoming topics of discussion emotional and physical spouse abuse and raising boys. Please let us hear from you. Send your manuscripts to:

Editor
Exponent II
Box 37
Arlington, MA 02174

Best of EXPONENT II

The *Exponent* staff is putting together a book entitled *The Best of Exponent II* and would appreciate your letting us know which articles you would like to see included. We are very anxious to include those articles that have inspired, challenged, and truly touched our readers. Please send us the titles of your top five choices by February 1, 1988.

Sisters Help and Sisters Speak

CONTINUED

not, and deny the abuse out of guilt over what feels like complicity. This all leads to more and more denial and a very strong resistance to frank discussion with the woman.

Secondly, because people are uncomfortable with rage to the point of really experiencing anxiety whenever it bursts forth in their presence, it is easier to avoid completely anyone expressing anger. Even appropriate, useful, and short-lived anger is spurned and condemned. The victim is seen as difficult and a pain.

Third, there is a tendency for some to assume that an angry Jill who has left an abusive situation must have been an unpleasant and angry wife, which is not often the case. She is blamed for driving her husband to violence, for deserving his emotional abuse.

This is just the core of the "blame the victim" response. It is common and the least helpful thing for both the abuser and the abused. In communities that live out this pattern so that the divorced couple are both aware of the response, the messages are damaging to both. The abuser gets the clear message that he has permission to leave himself unchanged and to feel "understood" and "approved of." The victim feels that the low-self image that abuse always leaves in its wake is deserved, that somehow she asked for and deserved what she got from her abusive spouse.

The lack of understanding and support from those that she feels ought to understand in itself becomes abuse and reinforces her feelings of guilt and her status as victim. It is this attitude that any good therapist works so hard to help erase and to replace with a stronger, more positive image of the woman as survivor and creator of her own good future.

Having read all I have read and having felt that this particular situation spoke to an important truth about this couple whom I hold dear and about the response by my LDS community, I felt compelled to tell this story. My friend is someone whom I regard as among the most enlightened and well-intentioned men I know, and yet I feel that he has blind spots about the issue of spouse abuse and the inappropriate responses to it that are unfortunately shared by the wider culture. It took my conversation with my friend and my unsettled feelings at the end of it to force me to re-examine my responses to women who have the courage to admit that they are victims of abuse.

I have learned a lot and have a lot more to learn, and my friend needs to learn a lot, too. I believe that we are representative of those who are not doing what we could for a problem that I'm sure must live in every ward and stake in Zion. I pray that by sharing our experiences and insight here we may collectively, and quickly, gain more enlightenment and will act according to our new light.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AND NEWS

Personal Essay Contest

We've received many, many requests to extend the deadline for submissions to our first annual Helen Candland Stark Personal Essay Contest, announced in the last issue. The contest is open to all of our readers, and essays may be on any subject appropriate to the personal essay genre. Entries must be typewritten or word processed, using double spacing and standard margins, and must not exceed twelve pages in this format. Four copies of your entry can now be postmarked as late as, but *absolutely no later than*, February 1, 1988, and sent to our post office box.

All essays submitted become the property of *Exponent II*. Previously published essays are not eligible. The winning essayist will be awarded a prize of \$300.00.

A selection of the best essays will be published in a future issue of *Exponent II*.

EXPONENT II Hotline

Exponent II now has a phone number you can call to suggest discussion topics for the paper, network with other readers, and have questions about subscriptions answered. The "Hotline" will be answered by machine if no one is available, and we will get back to you. The phone number is (617) 862-1928.

Subscriptions

It may be time for you to re-subscribe. Remember to check the mailing label on the front (upper right-hand corner) of your copy of *Exponent II* for the renewal date.

Please note also that because the post office does not forward *Exponent II*, it is important to send us any change-of-address well in advance.

I Need You!

Attention all colleagues, friends, and former students of Lowell L. Bennion: As Lowell Bennion's biographer, I am searching for letters, documents, diaries, articles, and testimonies relating to his life. Please call or write:

Mary L. Bradford
4012 North 27th Street
Arlington, VA 22207
(703) 524-4453

Our Apologies

A thousand pardons for the lateness of this, our "Summer" issue. Due to the proverbial computer malfunction, the production of this issue was severely delayed. It won't happen again. We're sure of this, because we all stood at the chalkboard and wrote "This won't happen again" 100 times.

There's a hidden message in all of this. We need to upgrade our computer system to the current capabilities of technology. So, look for a fund plea in the near future. Our readers really came through for the paper last time, and we hope to accomplish the same. Thanks for understanding.

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